

# The Teaching Pastor



- William-C-Bitting -



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The teaching pastor





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# THE TEACHING PASTOR



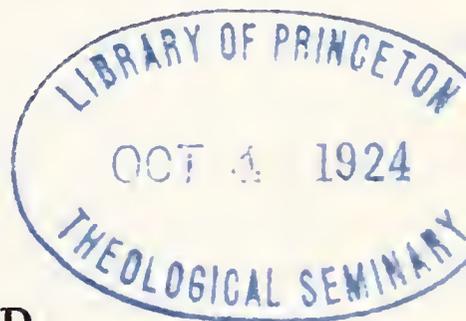
# THE TEACHING PASTOR

THE SAMUEL A. CROZER LECTURES

IN

CROZER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

1922-1923



By WILLIAM C. BITTING, D. D.

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THIS LITTLE BOOK  
IS GRATEFULLY DEDICATED  
TO THE THOUSANDS OF PERSONS  
WHO THROUGH MANY YEARS  
HAVE OPENED EARS AND HEARTS  
TO RECEIVE THE BEST THAT  
ONE TEACHING PASTOR  
COULD BRING FROM HIS OWN STUDY  
AND THOSE OF COUNTLESS OTHERS



STATEMENT OF  
THE SAMUEL A. CROZER LECTURESHIP  
IN  
THE CROZER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

The Samuel A. Crozer Lectureship, founded 1880, provides for special lectures to be delivered at the Seminary during each year. The instrument defining the object of Lectureship says:

The person to deliver these lectures shall be chosen by the Faculty of the Seminary, subject to the approval of the Board of Trustees . . . The topics of these lectures to be subjects that are profitable to be presented to Christian ministers or students for the ministry. In selecting lecturers the Faculty shall not be restricted to the Baptist denomination, but may appoint from any denomination termed evangelical, from laymen as well as ministers, and from citizens of foreign countries or our own as they (the Faculty) see fit. The lecturer may give single lectures, or a course of lectures, as circumstances may indicate or the Faculty may appoint.

On this foundation courses of lectures have been delivered annually since 1880, but very few have been printed.

The present volume contains the lectures delivered in March, 1923, by the Reverend William C. Bitting, D. D., pastor of the Second Baptist Church, St.

## Statement

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Louis, Missouri. Few pastors are better qualified to present the material contained in this volume; and it is issued with the conviction that it will be helpful to others in "the ministry of the Word."

MILTON G. EVANS,

*President Crozer Theological Seminary.*

JUNE, 1923.

## PREFACE

THE necessary limitation of the number of these lectures caused the giving up of the first intention to open the course with a treatment of the historical method of Bible study. Every lecture is based upon the use of that method. The writer believes that every part of the Bible is not only literature, but also in conception, utterance, and original publication an historical event that had a definite relation to the author or speaker, and to contemporary conditions. With possibly the exception of some psalms that are general expressions of religious feeling, the Scriptures cannot be understood, nor their power appreciated, without some knowledge of the historical situations out of which they grew.

It should further be stated that the subject was chosen because of experiences of the writer who for many years has tried to pursue the methods he advocates. His ministry has thoroughly vindicated both the intellectual sanity and spiritual value of what the lectures so inadequately describe. Observation also has confirmed experience. The lectures are suggestive, not exhaustive. No one could be more conscious of the incompleteness of treatment of any topic than the writer. Every paragraph in the lectures should be expanded for anything like a full treatment of the subject discussed therein. The reader will be able to enlarge upon the topic.

## Preface

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Quotations have been avoided. References have been confined mainly to the Bible itself. There is little literature extant upon the precise topic with which the lectures deal. The volumes of *The Biblical World* from the beginning until that periodical ceased to limit itself specifically to Bible study contain many articles that bear upon the topics treated herein. There will also be found in some publications of the Religious Education Association articles which deal with the same matter in a more or less thoroughly scientific way. The resources of general literature have not been utilized, although the wealth of illustration that could have been derived from poems, novels, essays, and books upon the Bible is limitless.

The lectures are published with a high sense of the privilege of making known the experiences of one minister, and of the joy in the effort to induce others to make the same experiment. The writer does not at all depreciate any other form of the ministry, every activity of which is noble, useful, and necessary beyond the power of words to describe. Nevertheless, the specific work herein advocated seems to be called for and is opportune in the present generation with its emphasis upon education, and the constantly increasing facilities provided by the State, by religion, and by private generosity. It also seems to be imperative because of conditions now existing in all Christian denominations, our own no less than others.

# CONTENTS

LECTURE	PAGE
I. THE NEED AND OPPORTUNITY FOR HIS MINISTRY . . . . .	1-24
CONCENTRATION OF FUNCTIONS IN THE PASTOR'S WORK . . . . .	1
I. THE NEED FOR THE TEACHING MINISTRY	3
1. ENLIGHTENING IGNORANCE OF THE BIBLE . . . . .	3
2. CORRECTING MISTAKEN IDEAS . . . . .	5
3. PREVENTING WRONG CONCEPTIONS . . . . .	8
4. HELPING IN PRACTICAL LIVING . . . . .	10
5. NEUTRALIZING UNINTELLIGENT TEACHING . . . . .	12
II. THE OPPORTUNITY FOR THIS MINISTRY..	14
1. THE OFFICIAL POSITION AS PASTOR..	14
2. CONTROL OF CHURCH SCHOOL INSTRUCTION . . . . .	16
3. WEEK-DAY CLASSES FOR STUDY . . . . .	18
4. THE USE OF GOOD BOOKS . . . . .	19
III. CAUTIONS FOR THE TEACHING PASTOR..	21
1. BE QUALIFIED . . . . .	21
2. GAIN THE CONFIDENCE OF THE PEOPLE . . . . .	21
3. PROCEED SLOWLY . . . . .	22
4. AVOID MAKING THE PULPIT A LABORATORY . . . . .	23
5. BE CONSTRUCTIVE IN SPIRIT AND PURPOSE . . . . .	24

# Contents

---

LECTURE	PAGE
II. REACTIONS OF HIS MINISTRY ON HIS LIFE . . . . .	25-47
NECESSITY OF PROPER QUALIFICATIONS . . .	25
I. REACTIONS ON PERSONAL LIFE . . . . .	26
1. COMPULSORY SYSTEMATIC BIBLE STUDY . . . . .	26
2. FELLOWSHIP IN PURSUIT OF SPIRITUAL REALITY . . . . .	28
3. WIDE CULTURE AS A BY-PRODUCT OF TEACHING . . . . .	29
4. ETHICAL ENTHUSIASM PERVADING ALL PROCESSES . . . . .	32
5. DEVOTIONAL APPRECIATION OF SACRED LITERATURE . . . . .	34
II. EFFECTS UPON HIS PUBLIC MINISTRY..	36
1. USES OF SCRIPTURES IN THE PULPIT.	36
2. CHOICE AND TREATMENT OF TEXTS IN SERMONS . . . . .	38
3. THE JOY AND VITALITY OF PREACHING . . . . .	42
III. INEVITABLE CHURCH EDUCATIONAL ATMOSPHERE . . . . .	45
III. HIS ONENESS WITH THE EDUCATED COMMUNITY . . . . .	48-71
THE TEACHER IN THE EARLY CHURCH AND HIS SUCCESSOR . . . . .	48
I. PRESENT FUNCTIONS OF THE TEACHING PASTOR . . . . .	51
1. UPLIFTING THE UNEDUCATED . . . . .	51
2. IDENTIFICATION WITH THE EDUCATED . . . . .	52

## Contents

---

LECTURE	PAGE
3. COMPETENT INTERPRETATION OF THE BIBLE .....	55
4. MEDIATING TRUTH TO MODERN LIFE.	57
5. EVANGELIZATION OF THE CULTURED.	61
6. RECRUITING TEACHING FORCES IN RELIGION .....	67
IV. HIS MINISTRY TO THE YOUNG.....	72-96
YOUNG PEOPLE MUST LIVE OUT THEIR OWN LIVES .....	72
I. DISCOVERIES CONCERNING RELIGIOUS EDUCATION .....	73
1. NEGLECTED IN MOST HOMES .....	73
2. UNSATISFACTORY IN MANY CHURCH SCHOOLS .....	75
3. SUPERIOR EQUIPMENT AND METHODS OF STATE SCHOOLS .....	76
4. INFLUENCE OF THE NON-ACADEMIC CURRICULUM .....	78
5. INEVITABLE RESULTS OF THESE CONDITIONS .....	80
II. THE SERVICE OF THE PASTOR .....	81
1. ANTICIPATING COLLEGE TESTS OF CHURCH-SCHOOL WORK .....	81
2. GUARDING AGAINST TEACHING THAT MUST BE UNLEARNED .....	83
3. PREVENTING MORAL SHOCK IN EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT .....	85
4. WELCOMING COLLEGE GRADUATES WHEN THEY RETURN HOME .....	87
5. HELPING THOSE WITHOUT EDUCATIONAL ADVANTAGES .....	89

## Contents

---

LECTURE	PAGE
6. PROMOTING EDUCATIONAL EVANGELISM .....	91
THE FORMS OF THIS MINISTRY.....	93
1. PULPIT AND PERSONAL SERVICE ....	93
2. CONTROL OF CHURCH-SCHOOL CURRICULUM .....	94
3. SUPERVISION OF YOUNG PEOPLE'S ORGANIZATIONS .....	96
V. HIS RELATION TO THE PROBLEM OF CHRISTIAN UNITY .....	97-123
THE FACT OF SECTARIANISM .....	97
I. THE HARMFULNESS OF SECTARIANISM..	97
1. INABILITY TO MAKE UNITED SENTIMENT EFFECTIVE .....	97
2. DISUNION IN CHRISTIAN WORK.....	99
3. WASTE OF MONEY .....	100
4. WASTE OF MINISTERIAL SERVICE ...	100
5. IMPRESSION ON NON-CHRISTIANS ...	101
6. CONFUSION IN FOREIGN MISSION WORK .....	102
II. CONDITIONS DEMANDING TEACHING PASTORS .....	102
1. EACH SECT APPEALS TO THE BIBLE..	102
2. LOVE AND SCHOLARSHIP THE SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM .....	103
3. THE PASTORS ARE LEADERS OF THEIR GROUPS .....	104
4. VARIETIES OF BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION .....	105
5. INFLUENCE OF DOGMATIC PREPOSSESSIONS .....	108

## Contents

---

LECTURE	PAGE
6. BONDAGE TO HISTORICAL AND HEREDITARY ACCIDENTS .....	111
7. FAILURE OF ALL OTHER PLANS FOR UNION .....	114
III. THE SPECIFIC CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE TEACHING PASTOR .....	117
1. LEADERSHIP IN SANE BIBLE STUDY..	117
2. MORAL COURAGE IN FACING TRUTH .	118
3. EMPHASIS UPON LIFE ABOVE LITERATURE .....	119
4. IF ALL MINISTERS WERE TEACHING PASTORS .....	121
VI. SOME SPIRITUAL VALUES OF HIS MINISTRY .....	124-150
EVERY FORM OF MINISTRY HAS ITS OWN SPIRITUAL VALUE .....	124
I. PERSONAL VALUES .....	124
1. MENTAL, SOCIAL, ETHICAL, AND DEVOTIONAL VALUES .....	124
2. REPOSE OF ENTIRE RATIONAL NATURE .....	125
3. NOURISHMENT OF SPIRIT WHILE FEEDING OTHERS .....	127
4. THE SPIRITUAL BLESSEDNESS OF TEACHING .....	128
II. APPRECIATION OF THE BIBLE .....	129
1. REVELATION THROUGH HISTORY ....	129
2. THE RELIGIOUS VALUE OF HUMAN EXPERIENCES .....	131
3. DIVINE USE OF CURRENT VEHICLES .	132
4. THE PERMANENT VALUES OF THE BIBLE .....	133

# Contents

---

LECTURE	PAGE
III. VALUES SEEN IN HUMAN LIFE . . . . .	135
1. THE PLACE OF THE BIBLE IN RELIGIOUS LIFE . . . . .	135
2. THE SOCIAL VALUE OF BIBLICAL IDEALS . . . . .	136
3. THE DEMOCRACY OF RELIGIOUS TRUTH . . . . .	137
4. THE INCREASE OF REVERENCE THROUGH KNOWLEDGE . . . . .	138
5. HOW THE BIBLE WAS MEANT TO GUIDE LIFE . . . . .	139
IV. THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD . . . . .	140
1. GOD'S REVELATION OF HIMSELF PROGRESSIVE . . . . .	141
2. THE STEADY DEVELOPMENT TOWARD THEISM . . . . .	145
3. THE REALITY OF GOD . . . . .	146
4. GOD WORKS NOW AS HITHERTO . . . . .	148

## LECTURE I

### THE NEED AND OPPORTUNITY FOR HIS MINISTRY

#### *Concentration of Functions in the Pastor's Work*

We are not unmindful of the work which the modern pastor is called upon to do. All functions of the ministry outlined in the New Testament are now expected of one man, and in addition many other forms of service that were not contemplated by the church in the first century, due to the development of human life and of the church itself. Possibly in the future, at a time not yet visible to us, all these particular groups which now are separated into denominations seeking to build up themselves, may come together, and once more we may have a number of men and women exercising the functions described by the New Testament. Our present divisions, with their clamor for money for self-support and sectarian propaganda, make it financially impossible, with rare exceptions, for Christians in a local church to have the ministry existing in the early undivided group. The same sad condition forces upon a single human being not only the function for which he is fitted, but many others in which neither personality nor training could make him expert. Special endowments for diverse services are recognized in the New Testament,<sup>1</sup> each of which

<sup>1</sup> Rom. 12 : 6-9 ; 1 Cor. 12 : 4-11 ; Eph. 4 : 11-13 ; 1 Peter 4 : 10, 11.

the Holy Spirit craves for the upbuilding of the church. It is only one of the shameful results of schisms in the Body of Christ that local churches are denied the help of all these various functions, each performed by a person specially gifted and trained.

Far be it from our purpose, then, to minimize or underestimate any form of ministry to the church and to the world. The Holy Spirit would use any ability which any individual Christian has and consecrate that to the development of individual life and to the growth of the kingdom of God. The evil days of sectarianism, with its financial burdens and consequent waste, not only prevent church-members from having the full help they need, but impose upon one man the functions distributed among many in the early church. He must be preacher, pastor, teacher, exhorter, administrator, student, counselor, source of knowledge and wisdom, evangelist, missionary, and all else. This is too much for any one person. None is so wonderfully gifted in personality as to discharge skilfully all these offices. No college or seminary training can produce such a prodigy. The time may come when our unhappy sectarian divisions may seem less important than the "perfecting of the saints for the work of ministration, for the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."<sup>2</sup> But it will come only when the "ascension gifts" in all their variety are at work, and the pastor is not expected to converge all in himself.

<sup>2</sup> Eph. 4 : 12, 13.

## I. THE NEED FOR THE TEACHING MINISTRY

If these lectures emphasize the need for one special function, that of teaching, it is not because any others are held to be of less importance. All are necessary. We lay stress upon the teaching function because of the conditions that seem to call for this special ministry.

Let us think of the need for this function. Is it not as true today as of those early Hebrew Christians, and with much less excuse than they had, that our church-members should be teachers and yet have need that some one should instruct them? <sup>3</sup> How many have left the elements of the doctrine of Christ and have pressed on to maturity? <sup>4</sup>

### 1. *Enlightening Ignorance of the Bible*

Consider the lack of intelligence as to the Bible. It is not at all idle to ask the question of Philip to the Ethiopian pilgrim, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" And the honest answer of the African<sup>5</sup> would be in the mouths of most Christians, "How can I, except some one should guide me?" The simple fact is that the rank and file of our church-members do not know the Bible. They are living upon so much of its truth as has come to them in sermons, or has been obtained through other channels. The great ethical ideals of the Scriptures are known not only by church-members, but by the world outside. But the book itself is a sealed volume to most of those who call themselves Christian. They love it, sing about it, give money for its circulation,

<sup>3</sup> Heb. 5 : 12.

<sup>4</sup> Heb. 6 : 2.

<sup>5</sup> Acts 8 : 30, 31.

read short selections before going to bed at night, with the aid of lesson helps try to extract spiritual meaning from detached sections in Sunday schools, fight about its meaning, dispute over systems of doctrine supposed to be taught in the volume—in short, do everything except faithfully, systematically study the priceless literature, which records the highest human experience of God during the days in which its different books were written.

Our very aphorisms commit us to the knowledge of the Scriptures. Such sayings as Chillingworth's, "The Bible and the Bible only is the religion of Protestants," or that of Campbell, adopted by the Disciples denomination, "Where the Scriptures speak we speak; and where they are silent we are silent," or Paul's,<sup>6</sup> "Thus saith the Scriptures," or the Baptist's,<sup>7</sup> "The New Testament is the all-sufficient ground of our faith and practise," and others equally well-known would seem to commit all who use them to patient, diligent study of the Bible. In spite of years of handling the material book, of attendance upon the Sunday school, and of faithful churchgoing, the ignorance of the Scriptures is amazing. The minds of most Christians contain the crudest conceptions of what the book really is. Earnest people, sincere in their motives, have resorted to all kinds of devices to discover so-called spiritual meanings in verses entirely severed from their connections and considered without reference to the purposes of the writer. Councils for the ordination of men to the gospel ministry have put the seal of their approval upon candidates whose

<sup>6</sup> Gal. 4 : 30.

<sup>7</sup> Northern Baptist Convention Annual, 1922, p. 133, Item 118.

examination showed no knowledge whatever of the mere contents of the Bible, much less of the messages of its books. There are in the ministry today many men whose lives indeed are pure and blameless, who have been given a denominational standing equal to that of the ripest scholar, who have been put in positions of leadership and stand before the public as authoritative interpreters of the Scriptures of which they know little. No one can wonder at the amazing lack of Biblical knowledge by churchmembers when such men are shepherds of the people, or when competent pastors are overburdened with the cares of preaching, visiting, administration, public service, and other responsibilities that consume all the time and strength of one man. If one were asked concerning the efficiency of Sunday-school methods in the past, it would be enough to answer that those who have for years been members of Sunday schools have not become qualified to teach the only book they were studying. What is to be thought of an institution called a "school" when those who have pursued its curriculum are incompetent to teach the very literature they have been supposed to study?

## 2. *Correcting Mistaken Ideas*

The pastor should correct mistaken ideas, produced not only by inaccurate conceptions of what the Bible is, but also by faulty methods of Bible study. Conceptions of God, of providence, of sin, and of many other religious factors have suffered because of erroneous methods of study. No intelligent minister will live long with the average congregation before he discovers these errors. This is a

serious matter. People have rightly been taught to attach high authority to the Scriptures. They have been declared to be the rule of faith and practise among Christians. It is, therefore, no light matter to appeal to them. When a high ideal of Biblical authority is joined with mistaken methods of interpretation and ignorance of what the Bible really teaches, the lives of sincere but misguided people are harmed. Many have put divine authority behind their erroneous conceptions. The result has been distortion, deformity, and disease of spiritual life. Here a real healing ministry is possible. Souls that have known the afflictions of their errors can be restored to comfort, peace, joy, and enthusiasm by the teaching of the pastor. Those who have known the delight of this ministry can easily recall many illustrations of deliverance from the blight of mistaken ideas. When one has understood the truth uttered by our Lord<sup>8</sup> that the kingdom of God has developed "First the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear," and that this has been the method by which God has unfolded himself in the experiences of men as recorded in the Scriptures, then such a soul is relieved of the burden of crude beliefs which have come from exalting into finality the early, partial, and incomplete revelations of religious ideas. The correction of these mistaken opinions which control the lives of earnest Christians comes by education through the teaching ministry of the pastor.

The persistence of what is learned in early years is well known. It is hard to unlearn. When Peter was on the housetop at Joppa, and the delayed

<sup>8</sup> Mark 4 : 28.

dinner only whetted his hunger, he fell into a trance and saw a whole menagerie let down from heaven. God would teach him readiness to receive the messengers of the Roman Cornelius. But the heart of the Jew had little hospitality for the Gentile. Three times the vision came, thrice the voice. The only answer was: <sup>9</sup> “Not so, Lord; for I never have.” Neither in trance nor in sane wakefulness could this apostle understand, for “he doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean.” How many times the teacher is met by that Petrine consistency! To all that would introduce new truth, sane but unfamiliar methods, it has been thought an ample reason for clinging to a mistaken notion to reply, “Not so, I never have.” Peter soon learned that he was not inspired in his refusal, nor was his past experience infallible as a guide. One wonders why he had not learned the lesson before, when in the Petrine Gospel of Mark <sup>10</sup> there is recorded our Lord’s revolutionary teaching concerning the impossibility of defilement by eating. Was it not after this experience and also after his inconsistent actions at Antioch<sup>11</sup> that his Gospel was written by Mark, and he added to the words of Jesus about unclean foods the comment,<sup>12</sup> “This he said, making all foods clean”? If it was so hard for Jesus by direct teaching, and the heavenly Father through a vision, to teach a truth to one of the greatest of the Twelve, we must not expect an easy time now in displacing mistaken conceptions. Yet precisely that ministry is necessary for Christians and the growth of the Christian society.

<sup>9</sup> Acts 10 : 9-17.

<sup>11</sup> Gal. 2 : 12.

<sup>10</sup> Mark 7 : 14-23.

<sup>12</sup> Mark 7 : 19 A. R. V.

### *3. Preventing Wrong Conceptions*

There is also a preventive ministry which the pastor can exercise. It is far better to teach truth that will never have to be unlearned than to suffer faulty conceptions to take root and then expose the soul to the painful process of pulling out the tares from the mind and heart. The teaching pastor can at least make his people acquainted with sane methods of interpretation, can cause them to see that results depend upon processes, that the teachings of the Bible are not always to be gathered from the surface of the literature by any silly, fanciful, or lazy saint, that the understanding of the Scriptures must be the fruit of an intelligent method of study. He can go far to forestall wild speculation from making inroads upon his congregation. Ignorance is the soil in which all kinds of soul-blights flourish. These are fungi that grow upon the tree of knowledge where the pastoral forester does not protect it. They are fads that flourish in the absence of real instruction. There are many who wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction.<sup>13</sup> Our Protestant churches have become fertile soil for many so-called religious movements that appeal to genuine religious instincts, but poison the minds of men and women with grotesque views of God, the error of the unreality of sin, a wretched caricature of Jesus, and other hideous distortions of truth. Our people have been taught to revere the Bible as the word of God, but have not been properly educated or trained in methods of interpretation. It is easy to realize that these so-called religious move-

<sup>13</sup> 2 Peter 3 : 16.

ments, many of them so grotesque as to defy any adjective which our vocabulary possesses, could never have been originated and propagated unless they had begun and continued through faulty ideas of the Bible, and erroneous processes of interpreting it.

The remedy is not denunciation, nor satire, nor ridicule; it is education. Those who have tried to pursue this ministry have often seen really pious and earnest people in the effort to satisfy their heart-hungers for spiritual reality prevented from going astray by a sane method of interpreting the Bible. Indeed, this prophylactic ministry is the critical thing. The minister who uses his Bible simply as a collection of texts without regard to the significance of the words of his text in the mind of the one who wrote or spoke them, is deliberately leading his people into the opinion that it made no difference with Biblical writers or speakers what they were saying, and that it makes no difference with us what they did say or mean, provided we can use their language as a motto from which we can derive divine authority for our own notions. So great is the need for this preventive ministry of the teaching pastor that people are bewildered by counter claims of those who urge the fads and those who combat them. Often it is more difficult to decide who knows less of the Scriptures, those who seek to establish their mistaken notions by appeal to the Bible, or those who go to the Bible for weapons to destroy such notions. Frequently both alike show equal ignorance of the Scriptures. The teaching pastor will so ground his people in a true idea of what the Bible is, and in sane methods of studying

it that they will be unaffected by either the queer and fanciful ideas that the incompetent imagine they derive from the Scriptures, or the ridiculous methods by which such ideas are obtained. If Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy had known either what the Bible really is, or the proper way to study it, there would never have been any such thing as "Christian Science." And if our pastors now realized the nature of the Scriptures and how to understand them, and faithfully educated their flocks in both these matters, there would be no straying into these grotesque folds except by those who were determined not to know the truth.

#### *4. Helping in Practical Living*

This teaching ministry will vastly help the practical living of Christians. It is a sad sight upon which no one likes to gaze—this spectacle of souls misled by misused Scriptures. Some persons take the very words of an English translation as talismanic. They think there is a magical force in the language of the Bible. I have known deeply pious church-members to open the book at random and construe the first words that met their eyes as indicating the will of God for their guidance in the particular perplexity that existed. I have known Christians to take the Bible by the covers, and hold it a few inches above a table and drop it, and then put an index finger into the tangled leaves, and assume that the particular text upon which the tip of the forefinger rested was sent to them by the Holy Spirit for their guidance at that particular moment. Many other equally insane methods of dealing with the Bible have prevailed far too frequently. Of course

this is divination pure and simple. Such persons are the lineal spiritual descendants of those who sought the will of God through haruspication, astrology, lots, and other fortuitous methods. The evil effects upon the lives of those who treat the Scriptures in this way cannot be exaggerated. There have been used disconnected texts that had absolutely no relation to one another, or to the problems whose solution was sought. These have been strung upon the threads of thought, as beads of different material, shape, and color would be strung, and the necklace of texts thus formed has been worn around the soul as an amulet, as a kind of scapular. We are relating only what has actually been seen. No one can distinguish between the superstition which thus uses texts of Scripture and that which uses other material, ornithological, visceral, or what not to obtain divine guidance.

There have been many so-called "Bible readings" in which "concordance theology" has been the goal of the reader. Words change during centuries because life continually pours its fulness into language. Men have rummaged through the books of the Bible, have assumed that the same words always mean the same thing, that the Scriptures were like a storehouse of automobile parts, and that all that the reader had to do was to pick out a part wherever he could find it under the belief that every part was standardized and all alike wherever found. There is no telling what harm has been done by these unintelligent Bible readings that fail utterly to take into account the differences of situation and purpose which produced different parts of the Scriptures.

Who can estimate the number of persons who have been misled by the methods alluded to, and by others we will not take time to indicate? When honest and sincere souls surrender themselves to a spiritual conception as being the will of God for human life, the utmost care should be taken that the idea to which we surrender is really and truly the mind of God. All this is only to say that sane methods of Bible study and true methods of pastoral teachings have enormous value for perfecting the saints in the holy life. After all, lives are simply the fruit of ideals. As Jesus was the Word made flesh, so our lives are the incarnations of our conceptions of truth. Jesus declared,<sup>14</sup> "I am the truth." He was indeed the reality lived before us, and there is no higher calling of the pastor than so to present spiritual reality that men may love it and live it. "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."<sup>15</sup> To understand Jesus, to find the principles of living incarnated in him, to interpret his life rightly, and spare no effort to learn from him, is to find the way of life. There is no use of the Scriptures so worth while as this, and to this the teaching pastor can lead his people.

### *5. Neutralizing Unintelligent Teaching*

The need for this teaching ministry by the pastor is also revealed in the unintelligent methods of teaching which have arisen, and of institutions which are based upon them. Some of these are dominated by theories, and the attempt is made to press facts into the molds of these theories. Surely

<sup>14</sup> John 14 : 6.

<sup>15</sup> John 8 : 12.

in dealing with divine things the spiritual and ethical order must be first the facts, and then the interpretation of the facts, and then the theories which grow out of these realities as understood. The Scriptures themselves are continually revealing to us the misfortunes that come from preconceptions. When Naaman, the Syrian, went to the prophet, through every step of the journey he was under the spell of a preconception. "Behold, I thought," he said,<sup>16</sup> and came near missing the great aim of his journey because of his preconceptions. John the Baptist had a program for the Messiah, and when his program was not carried out he appointed a committee of two of his followers to ask Jesus whether he was really the Messiah, or whether he should look for some one else.<sup>17</sup> We cannot enlarge upon the inevitable disappointments that come to human life when it is either built upon theories which facts do not justify, or orders itself by theories and then seeks to compress facts into accord with preconceptions. There is a terrible waste of money in sustaining institutions that violate the divine order just alluded to; a junking of life that tries to order itself by first forming theories and then irreverently pressing facts into conformity with theories. The rude awakening which is inevitable when once the majesty of facts is perceived and conscience affirms their authority, and theories are shattered, has often been experienced, and brings no comfort to any soul. If the shepherd of souls seeks to lead his sheep into the pastures which the Bible provides, and feeds the minds and emo-

<sup>16</sup> 2 Kings 5.

<sup>17</sup> Matt. 3 : 7-12 ; 11 : 2-6.

tions and souls of his flock upon the great facts which patient, intelligent study of the Scriptures provides, he will save his people from many a jar and from experiences that in the end will inevitably bring all kinds of disappointment. Surely there can be no greater need for Christian people than to become wise in the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures. They will be made wise unto salvation, which means full of wisdom in the right relation to God and to their fellow men.

## II. THE OPPORTUNITY FOR THIS MINISTRY

### 1. *The Official Position as Pastor*

Sincerity alone is not enough.<sup>18</sup> It demands the aid of intelligence. Well-meaning people need the light that comes from the use of methods that are sane and commend themselves to our rational natures. God never gave us our intellectual powers that we might insult them in the name of Christ.<sup>19</sup> Untrained pastors cannot fulfil the teaching ministry. The blind cannot lead the blind without disaster to both.<sup>20</sup> Nor can an ill-prepared minister hope to accomplish for his people the ideals hereinbefore set forth. Unintentionally, but none the less really, all institutions that would send out into the pastorate men who cannot teach because they do not know, are retarding the development of the church at large. The greatest need of the church today is the leadership of a teaching ministry. People look to the pastor for instruction. It is possible for him, by virtue of his continuous relation, to

<sup>18</sup> Acts 26 : 9.

<sup>19</sup> Matt. 6 : 22, 23.

<sup>20</sup> Matt. 15 : 14.

concentrate and make cumulative his educational ministry, without sacrificing other essential aspects of his work. Churches seldom think about this ministry when considering a pastor. His ability to preach is the main consideration, and the prophetic skill of a "candidate" is judged by one or two show sermons. This is but little more sensible than forming an idea of the architecture of a house, its inside plan, and furnishings by taking a few bricks from the walls as samples. What committee to nominate a pastor ever asks about his equipment and ability for teaching? And yet he is all the time teaching by virtue of his very ministry. Sundays and in midweek services, on all occasions, whether he is conscious of it or not, he is teaching something. Why not use his relation to his charge intelligently, and deliberately plan that his ministry shall be educational as well as hortatory?

When we say "educational," we do not mean a mere eruption of information from public addresses, as if the pulpit or platform were to be an encyclopedic volcano with the preacher as its loquacious crater. Far different is the idea. Education is the unfolding of life, the stimulation and development of all the powers of personality. And for this supreme ideal for the ministry there is no literature so serviceable as the Bible, and no ministerial work so fruitful as that which makes others know the nature of the Scriptures, and endows one's parishioners with correct methods of Bible study. Such an opportunity is inherent in the very relation of the pastor. Long after any mere emotion he may arouse has faded away, long after any dazzling rhetorical picture he has painted by the free use of lurid ad-

jectives has vanished into the cold, gray waste of prosaic life, long after flashings of scintillating phrases have died away into oblivion, there will endure the deep convictions of truth made by the teaching ministry. God forbid that any one should marry dulness to reality, or dryness to the water of life. The teaching pastor will build into lives he touches the very heart-beats of Biblical characters, and will in time lead his flock into fellowship with all the great and good whose lives are recorded in the Scriptures. No other calling offers such an opportunity as does the ministry, and in that calling only the teaching pastor seizes upon that opportunity.

## *2. Control of Church School Instruction*

If the pastor rightly controls instruction in his church school, he can through others further this teaching ministry. He should make the Sunday school a genuine educational institution, organized and constructed upon true educational ideals. The curriculum of the school must rest upon intelligent conceptions of the Bible, a broad and comprehensive knowledge of it, and instruction therein must be based upon correct pedagogical principles. There is no other sane way of giving to both young and old alike the truth which is the instrument of the Holy Spirit in the regeneration of men and their growth in Christian character. The church school should not be a mere Sunday morning or afternoon day-nursery for children to give a period of relief to uninterested parents. The adult members of the church without regard to age should be brought into the church school for this very instruction we are

advocating. Under the guidance of the pastor the fruits of the church school should be not only educational evangelism for the young; but an intelligent knowledge of the Scriptures by everybody, and as the crowning achievement of the school the training of church-members by virtue of their experiences therein. It is naturally to be expected that any real educational institution shall so train those who have pursued its courses of study that they shall become competent to teach what they have learned. Every pastor should redeem the Sunday-school idea from the vain and empty and often contemptuous significance into which it has fallen. Church-members without regard to age should be impressed with the truth that attendance upon or absence from the church school indicates a revelation of their interest in or indifference to the knowledge of the Scriptures. Here is a ready-made opportunity for the pastor to emphasize his teaching ministry.

If it be objected that laymen control the church school and are unwilling to yield to sensible ideals for its educational conduct, or are unwilling to fit themselves to realize these ideals in their management of the institution, then somehow they must be brought to see that their petrification, or their Diotrephesian appetite<sup>21</sup> must yield to the spiritual interests of the young, and the efficiency of the school as an institution. The present gratifying interest in church-school development only enhances the opportunity of the qualified pastor in the realm of religious education where the Bible must continue to be central.

<sup>21</sup> 3 John 9.

### 3. *Week-day Classes for Study*

There is no reason why instruction should be limited to one day of the week. In many places, and many churches, boys and girls are gathered for an hour after school once or twice a week, and the most helpful results follow. Certain denominations are emphasizing these additional hours for religious instruction, and their achievements should inspire others to imitation. The Bible and stereopticon pictures and even moving pictures are used. When these week-day sessions of the church school are held they become interesting, provided instruction is given in a way suitable to those who attend, and the work is made to be genuinely educational. Again what better use could be made of the midweek evening service than to center it around the Bible? From all over the land there come the tidings that the prayer-meeting is a hard service to maintain. No wonder. The saints do not have spiritual experiences enough to keep an "experience meeting" fresh and without monotony. The faithful who are regular attendants are thoroughly familiar with one another's experiences. They have heard the victrola disk testimonies until these have become monotonous and soporific. No outsiders come to whom can be told these so-called Christian experiences in the effort to allure them into participation in such experiences, and certainly many narrations are such that none would crave to reproduce them in his own life. Why not use the midweek evening service as a regular hour for sane and systematic Bible study? The men could then attend. In a few years those who came to such a meeting would have a

deepened interest in and a fuller knowledge of the Scriptures.

Again, why not have as a regular part of the pastor's work a stated morning week-day hour for systematic Bible study? Many women who for domestic reasons could not attend the church school on Sunday mornings, or for reasons of prudence and safety could not go out alone to the midweek evening service, would be present. One pastor has had such an hour from eleven o'clock until noon, one morning each week for many years, except during the World War. In 1916 there were three hundred and twenty women enrolled in the class, seventy-five per cent. of whom were not members of that pastor's flock. The meetings have been resumed, and the interest is growing. The story of how this class has affected persons and Bible study in other churches would be interesting, but cannot be told here.

#### 4. *The Use of Good Books*

In addition to all this there is an abundance of good books easily understood by the average person which set forth the results of reverent, modern, constructive study. These are cheap and within the reach of the ordinary man and woman. Never before has this literature been so plentiful. The old-fashioned commentary has disappeared. It took up each verse separately, tried to show its so-called spiritual meaning, suggested themes for sermons or thoughts for exhortations by Sunday-school teachers, and sometimes came perilously near twisting off the tails of commas in the King James' Version in the frantic effort to find religious significance

in every verse of the Bible. Today the main task of those who issue these books is to help the reader to understand precisely what was in the mind of the author of a Biblical book. We are thus relieved by the help which others have provided from doing many things which have already been accomplished with far greater skill than most pastors could hope to have. There is no excuse today for ignorance concerning the Bible. Indifference to it is the only reason that can honestly be given for lack of knowledge concerning it. Every phase of its existence has been well set forth in books clearly written and fascinating in contents. The story of the manuscripts and translations, the way the collection came to be gathered, the historical setting of every book in the Scriptures and how and why it came to be written, are told by masters in the art of telling. All these helps are cheap and easily understood. The pastor should know of them and commend them to his people, see that they are used as text-books in the church school, introduce them into homes, and have them in a church library for the use of those who might not otherwise consult them. It has been found possible to get public libraries to instal these books for the general use of the community. What better service could any pastor render than to increase the circulation of these helps, and through them the knowledge of the Bible? The large number of such volumes covering all phases of Bible study is evidence of an increasing interest in the knowledge of the Scriptures. This deepening desire to know the Book is a great aid to those pastors who seek to make it the one book with which all Christians should be familiar.

### III. CAUTIONS FOR THE TEACHING PASTOR

#### 1. *Be Qualified*

Some cautions must be offered to those who undertake this service. The pastor himself should be thoroughly qualified. Any man who consents to serve a church should be equipped to undertake this work. No one will claim that three years in the cloistered life of a seminary will make him a great scholar or a great teacher. At the same time these years of special preparation will put the student so far ahead of the average church that his problem will be to keep in touch with his congregation. Far be it from our purpose to criticize the curriculum of any theological school. Nevertheless, a seminary that does not fit its graduates to pass on to those whom they are to train in the Christian life an enthusiasm for and an interest in the Scriptures, cannot be said to succeed in its work. As in all things else, the secret of successful work in this respect will largely depend upon the qualification of the leader.

#### 2. *Gain the Confidence of the People*

It is of primary importance that the pastor who undertakes to lead his people into the better knowledge of the Scriptures should establish himself in the hearts of those whom he leads. When we seek to lead men into thoughts which are new to them we must not only begin with the ideas we find in their minds, but we must have gained their trust in us as leaders. This was the method of the Great Teacher. Violent assault upon traditional or im-

perfect or mistaken ideas can only produce a tighter grip upon them. At no point in the journey which an intelligent pastor proposes to make with those whom he teaches, should there be a break between himself and them. All assumption of authority must be set aside. People will listen to one in whose Christian life they have confidence, if his methods respect the personality and history of those whom he wishes to follow. The surest way to fail is to begin by antagonizing those whom we would lead, by ruthlessly tearing away ideas that have been cherished. Humbly and modestly we must seek to go before those who follow our pastoral leading.<sup>22</sup> If our lives have shown a Christian character, and our sermons revealed a genuine devotion to Jesus Christ and a sincere love for the Bible, others will listen to us, and will walk into pastures new and fresh to them when their faith in the leader is strong. No locomotive will pull a freight train if the engineer jerks the throttle so quickly as to break the couplings.

### *3. Proceed Slowly*

Too much stress cannot be laid upon the importance of proceeding very slowly. Time after time a pastor has wrecked himself by haste. There was profound philosophy in what the limping Jacob said<sup>23</sup> to his athletic brother Esau when they were journeying together: "My lord knows that the children are tender, and the flocks and herds that give suck are with me; and if they drive them hard one day, all the flock will die. I will lead on in my slow way, at the pace of the cattle that are

<sup>22</sup> John 10 : 4.

<sup>23</sup> Gen. 33 : 13.

before me, and at the pace of the children until I come to my lord to Seir." The wise pastor will see that there are no shocks beyond those of pleasant surprises, of beautiful illuminations, and of unexpected acquaintance with the richness of life. Did not our Great Teacher say <sup>24</sup> to his followers, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now"? All structures that are inadequate or outgrown, such as bridges over streams or chasms, can be replaced by stronger and better ones, without impeding the traffic, if builders will first have the material on the ground, each part accurately numbered, and then piece by piece remove the old and establish the new.

#### 4. *Avoid Making the Pulpit a Laboratory*

Nor must the pastor make his pulpit and prayer-meeting a place where he exhibits and describes the apparatus that produces results. When people come to worship on Sundays, or to deal with the experimental and practical concerns of the Christian life at the week-day services, they should not be conducted into a laboratory. They do not care to be taken into the kitchen, but come to sit down to its finished product in the dining-room. While a pastor in preaching should be rigidly true to sane processes of interpretation, he aims to comfort, inspire, and persuade men and to affect their lives. The exhibition of critical processes in the pulpit is not only bad taste, but is an effort to feed hungry hearers upon pots and pans and cook-stoves instead of the wholesome and appetizing food which has been prepared in them.

<sup>24</sup> John 16 : 12 ; cf. Mark 4 : 33.

### 5. *Be Constructive in Spirit and Purpose*

Above all, the spirit of the teacher should be constructive. It should be made clear that his purpose is not to tear down old notions. He can well afford to be gently positive and let everything else take care of itself. All labels indicating whether things are new or old can be thrown into the waste-basket. The emblem of such a teacher should not be an axe or a knife, but rather a trowel or the tools of a garden. The brown leaves of last summer still cling to the scrub oak. The ice, winds, and snow of the winter have not torn them away. There is a toughness in their clinging which is unaffected by outside forces. When the tilt of the earth brings our world into a new relation to the sun, the springtime comes, and the new life awakens the tree from the winter slumber, the sap begins to flow, and the old leaves drop off through the power of the new life within. Let us learn the parable of nature if we would lead our followers into a nobler appreciation of the truth and a more accurate knowledge of the great book which contains the highest religious experience of the race. Let us so constructively present reality that it shall be its own authority and claim the hearts of those whom we lead with its inherent axiomatic power.

## LECTURE II

### REACTIONS OF HIS MINISTRY ON HIS LIFE

#### *Necessity of Proper Qualifications*

It has been said that the pastor must be qualified for this work of teaching. His educational career at college and at the theological seminary will give him a good start. It must not be thought, however, that the man of God will be thoroughly furnished unto all good works, especially that of dividing the word of truth aright,<sup>1</sup> simply because he has had such educational opportunities. Indeed, so vast is the equipment necessary that probably no one has ever been thoroughly qualified. The college and seminary prepare us only to start. Real preparation is perennial and continuous. The pastor must be at work all the time upon the great book.

In addition to, and equally important with, the knowledge of the Scriptures will be the forming of contacts with the people who are to be led, as Jesus did with the Samaritan woman, in their common desire for water;<sup>2</sup> the appreciation of the sincerity of men and women and their praiseworthy clinging to truth as they understand it though they be either faulty or mistaken in their ideas;<sup>3</sup> the tact that would introduce new conceptions only by bringing others face to face with facts that are self-evident;<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 2 Tim. 2 : 15.

<sup>2</sup> John 4 : 7.

<sup>3</sup> Acts 18 : 26 ; 19 : 1-4.

<sup>4</sup> Acts 3 : 10 ; 4 : 14.

the spirit of reverence that will tolerate nothing merely destructive, nor speak lightly of any parts of the sacred literature; and the one purpose to discover the truth that it may rule over all lives. There are spiritual qualifications that we must seek to possess, without which a merely intellectual equipment can never achieve results. The Bible can be understood and taught only by those who are in sympathy with its purposes. No mere master of acoustics could ever be fitted to teach music unless the harmonies were also in his soul. This constant effort of the pastor to qualify himself for this important work has certain reactions upon himself.

### I. REACTIONS ON PERSONAL LIFE

Beneath all public and professional ministries there is the individual life that is the secret of all we can accomplish. What we are is the secret of all we can say or do.

#### 1. *Compulsory Systematic Bible Study*

The need of being qualified compels systematic Bible study. "Thou that teachest another, dost thou not teach thyself?"<sup>5</sup> There are passages in the Bible which are "More to be desired than fine gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb,"<sup>6</sup> upon which any human being, however unskilled in Bible study, might nourish his soul. It is true that these may be possessed and the spiritual ideal they contain enthroned over our lives. Nevertheless, we may possess all of these and be ignorant of the Book itself. Yet it cannot be denied

<sup>5</sup> Rom. 2 : 21.

<sup>6</sup> Ps. 19 : 10.

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that spiritual reality which is the instrument of the Holy Spirit in the regeneration and development of our lives, can best be discovered, appreciated, and enthroned only by sane methods of Bible study. Too often the minister thinks he is so engrossed with parish details, visitings, chores, and public functions that he cannot give himself to systematic Bible study. The pastor who ceases to be a student of the Scriptures when he enters upon his ministry and fails to develop his knowledge of the Bible is destined to experience an atrophy of soul, to become a mere mechanic, and a bungling homiletic artisan. He must keep in touch with the sources of life, maintain uninterrupted connection with the reservoir if the waters are to flow through him to freshen and invigorate the lives of others, and nourish his own soul in the process of distribution. The minister may piously read the book through "from cover to cover," may know its language and its contents, and yet be densely ignorant of its message. His daily Bible readings may merely salve his conscience, or appease the claims of ministerial duty. But his use of the Bible is to be far different. Only systematic study will put him in possession of the significance of a book, give him the message of that book to the day and generation in which it was written, and help him to understand the view-point of the writer or speaker whose words are therein recorded. Habits of study are essential. The minister who will every day conscientiously devote a given period to faithful, honest investigation of a book of the Bible will find himself much richer at the end of a month than if he had spent the same amount of time in so-called devotional reading, or

in desultory and saltatory uses of the Scriptures. There is no excuse for laziness here, nor should any one be satisfied with anything less than the very best study he can possibly give.

There have been instances where congregations assembled early in the morning for the purpose of hearing the New Testament read through in a single day. Different readers followed one another. It would be unfair to say that no advantage resulted to anybody from such an unusual experience. Nevertheless, it can hardly be questioned that if the day had been devoted to a single book of the New Testament in an honest effort to understand the life out of which it grew, the purpose of the writer in producing it, and the message it bore to those for whom it was written, the results of the day would have been vastly more helpful.

## *2. Fellowship in Pursuit of Spiritual Reality*

Systematic study will bring the minister into close fellowship with others who are seeking to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of God that passes knowledge.<sup>7</sup> The pursuit of knowledge is a social matter. No one saint alone could comprehend the love that passes the knowledge of any one person. Each of us needs to have the light that has come into another's soul. Sometimes this corrects our own views, often increases our perceptions, or modifies our conclusions, and frequently gives us the joy of confirmation of our results. In any event it stimulates any one who is engaged in this systematic study for the purpose of teaching. In all de-

<sup>7</sup> Eph. 3 : 19.

partments of knowledge men work together. They receive one another's results, test them, verify them, correct them, modify them in various ways. To be in fellowship with those who have such high purposes is in itself a holy privilege. How can one forego membership in such a consecrated fraternity? Communion of saints in pursuit of knowledge is blessed.

The uplift that comes to the pastor's life in being related to others in this quest for light cannot be surpassed except by the joy that the possession of the light brings. To have one's ignorance enlightened, to see one's mistakes corrected, and his partial visions amplified, to become enriched through the honest workings of another's brain and heart—these are gains to ourselves that are beyond estimate. The dogmatic spirit is exorcised by such union in efforts. No one can live unto himself in any realm of life.<sup>8</sup> Isolation is fatal to expansion. The teaching pastor is forced out of all insularity. He must join with others in the common pursuit of spiritual reality as recorded in the Bible. It is true that many lives were necessary to produce that priceless literature. It is equally true that many lives are needed to interpret it. Why travel this path like a lonely tramp when a great company awaits our fellowship in the journey?

### 3. *Wide Culture as a By-product of Teaching*

The cultural value of this preparation for teaching is beyond all power to describe. The historical method of Bible study compels each student to know the situation out of which each book of the Bible came and the purposes of the writer to influence

<sup>8</sup> Rom. 14 : 7.

those for whom his book was written. One must become acquainted with literary methods current at the time the book was produced, make to live again the historical conditions that existed, become acquainted with geography, archeology, customs, great world movements, relations personal and international, and abandon for the time being his citizenship in the present to live again with those who wrote the Scriptures. How is it possible for any one to understand the Old Testament prophets unless their books are read in the light of the crises that produced them, of the hunger for world-wide empire on the part of Assyria, Egypt, Babylonia, the Hittites, of the geographical location of Palestine as a thoroughfare over which these contending countries had to go in order to get at one another? The fact is that these great world powers are mentioned at all in the Old Testament, which deals specifically with the development of the religion of Jehovah among the Hebrew peoples, only because the prophets were interpreters of universal history and saw in world movements indications of the purposes and the spirit of the God of all the earth. They were students of international politics. Assyria was Jehovah's rod<sup>9</sup> and his razor.<sup>10</sup> Cyrus was Jehovah's Messiah.<sup>11</sup> Isaiah gave us a philosophy of history at the time when Rome was founded. These and numberless other things indicate how lean and meager are interpretations of the Old Testament prophets which ignore the great cosmic currents. How could any one hope to understand the tortuous development of the idea of Messianism unless he was

<sup>9</sup> Isa. 10 : 24.

<sup>10</sup> Isa. 7 : 20.

<sup>11</sup> Isa. 45 : 1.

acquainted with the religious conceptions of the people who touched Israel in its national development? The same questions might be asked about every other part of the literature of the Old Testament. It is not enough for us to have merely a good English translation. We must know thousands of things that are not expressly stated in the literature in order that we may understand the literature itself.

Precisely the same is true of our New Testament, although the life that it records is centuries nearer to our own than the life out of which the Old Testament grew. How much light is thrown upon the early Christian literature by recognizing the pre-literary period of the early church, and realizing the epistolary period as revealed in the Pauline correspondence, and that all the letters of the great apostle were written before our earliest existing Gospel was produced! When one goes further and asks why this was the case with this priceless literature, and discovers the causes that really produced this situation, the information gained puts a wholly new conception upon the New Testament. In other words, the minister who would qualify himself for the service herein described necessarily is led into large regions of knowledge, the mere acquaintance with which is denied to those who are indifferent to thorough preparation for Bible teaching. The cultural value of such study cannot be exaggerated. It is not too much to say that countless books have been produced to help us know and appreciate the messages of the Biblical books dealing with these unmentioned but luminous conditions which alone can make clear the sacred pages.

#### 4. *Ethical Enthusiasm Pervading All Processes*

There is an ethical reaction also that occurs in the life of the pastor who prepares himself for this teaching ministry. His passionate devotion to reality will force him without reserve to ascertain what the facts are. He will not be content with anything else than exactness and thoroughness. In other words, all that is implied in honest study will rush back in upon his total character. He will find integrity in mental work breaking through mere intellectual bounds and seizing upon and dominating his love, his plans, and his relations. He will soon come to believe that only reality can satisfy anywhere. No pains will be too severe for him to discover truth. He will be willing to sweat his brains. He will be courageous enough to admit that he does not know. He will never be content with make-believe or with sham anywhere. He will soon come to see that only the truth can make us free.<sup>12</sup> Only reality emancipates. All else enslaves. With processes of study so thoroughly ethical, his entire nature soon comes to yield to the ethical ideal as sovereign. He will not take advantage of the ignorance of those with whom he deals to employ unreal methods or to state half-truths simply because he may get some response from those whose lives he touches. He will scorn as unworthy of the God of reality or of the Christ who said,<sup>13</sup> "I am the truth," anything else or less than exactness of statement, and to the best of his ability will use only that which has verified itself to his sincere studies as being the fact. The only way to escape

<sup>12</sup> John 8 : 32.

<sup>13</sup> John 14 : 6.

bondage from error, ignorance, and superstition is through surrender to reality. If God be the great Reality, he can build no kingdom anywhere upon the foundation of ignorance or of error or of superstition. Still less than any other realm can he found the kingdom of Christ upon any other basis than reality.

Is it not well worth while to pursue a discipline that shall thus react upon one's total character? One of the highest fruits of this preparation for teaching others will be such ethical fiber in all the minister's life. All prophets of God need it. "Will ye, for God, speak that which is wrong, and for him will ye utter deceit?" said Job.<sup>14</sup> "Let me alone; and speak will I, let come upon me what will. Wherefore do I take my flesh in my teeth, and put my life in my hand? Behold—He may slay me; I may not hope; but my ways will I maintain, to His face. Nay, that shall be to me also for salvation, for no false one shall come into His presence."<sup>15</sup> Such will be the stern adherence to facts by one whose whole being is steeped in the ethical baptism of reality. The real God will tolerate no sham. Nowhere do we so learn that truth as in Biblical study. And begirt with its strength the pastor will in all the recesses of his being and in all leadership of his people be courageous enough to scorn all temptation to compromise with unreality anywhere. Is it too much to claim that our Lord himself in the experiences of his temptation won his battles because his soul was armored in impregnable ethical equipment partly at least acquired from his study of his

<sup>14</sup> Job 13 : 7.

<sup>15</sup> Job 13 : 13-15, Genung's translation in the "Epic of the Inner Life."

Bible? He met all assaults by spiritual and ethical repulses expressed in Old Testament language.<sup>16</sup>

### 5. *Devotional Appreciation of Sacred Literature*

The devotional value of such study to the pastor's life is inconceivable. Preachers' souls need precisely the same nourishment which they wish to bring to others. Nevertheless, we cannot feed ourselves upon husks. No mere words nor any torture of them in the hope of squeezing out spiritual significance can nourish our spirits. If we live again with those who lived in Biblical times, feel their hopes and fears, experience their trials and comforts, our own hearts will glow with the same fires that warmed the spirits of those who broke out into hymns of praise or prayers, because the same humanity, the same trials, and the same God belong to us alike. We shall find the same courage for troubles and dark days and hardships. There will be no part of the Bible growing out of human experience that will not yield to us its precious strength for our personal lives. We shall suffer with those who suffered, rejoice with those whose thanksgivings burst forth with such music and power. We shall sit with them in their darkness, and be illuminated with the light that shone upon their careers. This is the true devotional experience. It is something that is vital and that does not depend upon a misuse of a single word in all the Bible. We enter into life. We see that all expressions of it recorded in this literature are windows through which we can peer into the sacred experiences of the lives of men and women,

<sup>16</sup> Matt. 4 : 4 ; cf. Deut. 8 : 3 ; Matt. 4 : 7 ; cf. Deut. 6 : 16 ; Matt. 4 : 10 ; cf. Deut. 6 : 13 ; 10 : 20.

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and doorways through which we can enter into their deepest secrets. The soul of the Bible will enter into our own souls, and we shall have the holy communion of spirits which will bring us afresh the feeling that God is in all life and that every place is a sanctuary. Surely a study that will yield such experiences is far more truly devotional than any mere sentimentalism that may rest upon an untrue use of any word even though it be in the Bible.

The truest devotional use of the Bible is in such study. The fact of the unity of the soul makes it impossible for us to share the companionship of any Biblical character or writer without participating in his emotions as well as his thoughts. Only as we project ourselves back into the history of those who found in God their hopes and deliverances will our own hopes and faith become strong to meet our experiences. Detached maxims and mottoes, mere quotations from the literature wholly apart from the circumstances that begot them, have no real virility. We may try to warm these isolated sentences by imagination, and make them take the chill from our cold souls, but the caloric that emanates from our own fancies is only a delusive substitute for the fire that other lives have kindled in their rough friction with fears, distresses, and perplexities. Into these flames we can throw ourselves with our own peculiar and personal needs, and become fresh fuel for the proven heat. Only in this vital method of sharing the lives of others can we truly use their words of sorrow and joy. Lives must become one before language is identical. The real devotional value of sane Bible study far exceeds any other conceivable devotional uses of the Scriptures.

## II. EFFECTS UPON HIS PUBLIC MINISTRY

The effect upon the public ministry of the teacher will likewise be most valuable. Our personal experiences will be reflected in our public life. We are the mediators of divine life to the souls of others. Behind the public ministry is the man. In personality, private habits, the effects of this preparation for our teaching ministry will reveal themselves. They cannot be concealed. A life that has dedicated itself as has just been outlined can have no official or professional aspects. It will be genuinely personal, the gift of one's self. It cannot be conventionally ministerial. Jesus was what he taught. All his words, deeds, and attitudes were only normal revelations of himself. He was not one being in the interior of his soul, and another before the world. In him there was no professionalism. The Teacher expressed himself, spoke what he knew.<sup>17</sup> His words were spirit and life.<sup>18</sup> He unfolded himself and asked others to be like himself. That is the highest preaching. Alas, that we dare not do the same. Yet that is to be our ideal.

### 1. *Uses of Scriptures in the Pulpit*

The noblest public ministry is simply the expression of our best personal lives. What then does this mean for our uses of the Bible in public?

We shall let our sane study of the Bible determine our uses of the Scriptures in the pulpit. No longer will the reading of the Scriptures in public worship be simply an item in so-called "preliminary exer-

<sup>17</sup> John 3 : 11.

<sup>18</sup> John 6 : 63.

cises," or a part of "introductory services," as if the sermon were the center of our interest in the house of God. We speak to God in our prayers. He speaks to us in the reading of the Scriptures. The reading of the Scriptures will be far more than a traditional feature in a public service. We shall carefully select it. We shall read it with a consciousness that in it there is a message for ourselves and for others. We shall be like Ezra at the water gate who "read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading."<sup>19</sup> There can be nothing more delightful or effective than the reading of the Scriptures by one who understands the significance of the particular passage he is bringing to the people. What could better help to prepare hearts to receive a genuine message from God through the preacher to the people than a passage of Scripture whose reading is also its interpretation. No pastor whose deep study had led him into the very life recorded or expressed in a Scripture selection could be careless in choosing the section to be read, or mechanical in the reading of it. Imagine if you can the feelings of the Teacher when he unrolled the scroll until he came to Isaiah 61 : 1-3, for his text for the sermon in the synagogue of his home town. Study the meaning of that Scripture as originally uttered. Ponder the familiarity of our Lord with the Old Testament as revealed in his choice of those particular words. With what interpretative power he read it, because he saw its ideals completely realized in his conception of his mission.<sup>20</sup> Should not all pastors try to make their pulpit use of the Scrip-

<sup>19</sup> Neh. 8 : 8.

<sup>20</sup> Luke 4 : 17-19.

tures as effective as our Lord made this section in his reading at Nazareth, so far as is possible? Only the studious pastor who knows his Scripture will be able to say,<sup>21</sup> "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears."

## 2. *Choice and Treatment of Texts in Sermons*

Such a ministry will govern the preacher in his use of texts for sermons. Hardly anything could be more contemptible than a misuse of passages of Scripture as texts. The people have been brought to believe that the Bible is "the word of God," as it certainly is in a real and true sense. Could anything be more unbecoming than for a supposedly authoritative teacher of the Bible to misuse the text and have the people think that divine authority is behind his misused text? No honest man would so treat a letter which he received from a friend. One of the canons of correspondence is that the reader shall try to discover precisely what was in the mind of the writer. Any deviation from this canon marks the reader as essentially untrustworthy, as really dishonest. In a great picture the idea of the whole pervades every line of the perspective, every particle of color, every movement of the artist's brush. Each detail gets its meaning and significance from the idea that the entire picture is intended to give to the beholder. In a classical musical composition the feeling and language of the entire production pervades every phrase, every chord, and every single note. Each sound both alone and in its grouping is intended to minister to the emotion which the composition is intended to pro-

<sup>21</sup> Luke 4 : 21.

duce in the hearer. It is precisely so with the Scriptures. All sentences in a Biblical book are to be pondered in the light of the purpose of the writer.

Alas, how many times this has been forgotten or deliberately ignored by preachers who are not students. There has been much contemptible motto-mongering. Because the words of King James' version seemed to lend themselves to the purposes men had in mind words have been torn out of their context, sometimes infelicitously adapted, occasionally cruelly mutilated, often grotesquely "spiritualized," and have been made texts and pretexts for so-called sermons. It is to be feared that often the Scriptures have been used only as a collection of proof-texts for dogmas, or of mottoes for sermons.

One cannot catalog the Scriptures that have been so misused. "The king's business required haste" was the lie of an outlaw,<sup>22</sup> and tells us of the untrue statements to which occasionally a good man in desperate straits feels forced to resort. It is in no sense a divine statement that God is in a hurry, and that we who attend to his affairs had better make haste. When Amos said<sup>23</sup> that he saw "A basket of summer fruit" he was not handing out a figure for twentieth-century preachers to use in reciting summer vacation experiences, but was describing a rotten condition of Israel's morals that called for quick judgment. When the same rugged man of the wilderness asked,<sup>24</sup> "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" he was not framing a question for contentious twentieth-century dogmatists to ask in the mistaken supposition that there could be

<sup>22</sup> 1 Sam. 21 : 8.

<sup>23</sup> Amos 8 : 1, 2.

<sup>24</sup> Amos 3 : 3.

no spiritual fellowship between those who had differences of opinion, nor forging a doctrinal compass to bale guesses into an authoritative creed. How many times have these words been used as a club to scare honest persons from original thinking! He was stating in a beautiful way his idea of the law of cause and effect. In a pathless wilderness two could not meet in a certain spot unless there had been a previous agreement or a trysting. When Laban said to Jacob,<sup>25</sup> "The Lord watch between me and thee when we are absent one from another," he was not preparing thousands of years before the Christian Endeavor Society was organized a beautiful Mizpah benediction which was intended to describe the trust that we should have in one another and God's care for all of us. Nor was he coining the word "Mizpah" for the inside of engagement rings. It was the language of suspicion and not of confidence. Two unscrupulous Semites had made an agreement. One of them said, "Since we are not to be together to keep an eye on each other, the Lord keep an eye on both of us to see that we are true to our bargain." When one of the sages said,<sup>26</sup> "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he," he was not framing a psychological truth to express the idea that thoughts really are the indexes of our character. He was describing an insincere host whose guest was told:<sup>27</sup> "Eat thou not the bread of him that hath an evil eye, neither desire thou his dainties; for as one that reckoneth within himself so is he. Eat and drink, he saith unto thee; but his heart is not with thee. The morsel which thou

<sup>25</sup> Gen. 31 : 49.

<sup>27</sup> American Revised Version, Margin.

<sup>26</sup> Prov. 23 : 7.

hast eaten shall thou vomit up, and lose thy sweet words." When discerning and intelligent Bible students or sensible persons in the pew hear ministers misuse texts in this way, they are disgusted and lose all respect for a teacher who will so pervert the words of Holy Writ. Some years ago I was asked by a very distinguished pulpit orator if I knew of a volume which classified the texts of the Bible according to their meaning. The question was puzzling, as if any such volume was at all possible. He explained that he supposed there must be some book which classified the different sentences of Scripture according to the subjects with which they dealt. He was reminded that modern Biblical study was of an entirely different type, that we try to understand the books as books, and that such a volume could represent only the opinions of the person who produced it as to the meaning of the detached Biblical sentences. I told him that when I lived in New York I had such a volume, but when I moved to St. Louis had sold it as junk with many hundreds of others accumulated in the times of my ignorance at which God forgivingly winked. He insisted upon knowing the name of it, because often when he had finished his sermon he was at a loss to find an appropriate text.

What could be more beautiful and effective than for the hearers of a preacher to know that whenever their minister took a text his exhortations would not be based upon the mutilation or distortion of sacred words! Is it not astonishing how often it is seen that a high sense of verbal inspiration is not incompatible with such a misuse of Scripture as we are describing? Even in the pulpit while he is

preaching the pastor does not cease to be a teacher of the Bible. There is no justification for making the impression upon one's hearers that it makes little difference what a Biblical writer meant, so long as a modern preacher can use the words of an English translation as a motto. Dr. H. G. Weston once told his class about an institute for ministers he had just held in a certain State, and summed up his work in his homiletic lectures by saying, "I must have killed at least ten thousand old sermons based upon misused texts."

### 3. *The Joy and Vitality of Preaching*

Such study and dedication to the work of teaching provides for a joy in preaching unknown to those who are not conscious of having behind their utterances the experiences and lives whose vital experiences are recorded in the Bible. We too today can teach with the authority of "Thus saith the Lord" when we have clearly come to know the will of God and his thought. There is such a thing as subjective homiletics. The sermon is vastly more than an exercise in sacred rhetoric. Far be it from our purpose to depreciate the utmost endeavor on the part of the preacher to give his utterances the best possible form. The best we can do would come far short of appropriate tribute to any truth we are trying to proclaim. Nor could it be too good for those who listen to us. While in every way desirable, form is not essential. The majesty of God's truth and the needs of human souls are so imperative that no form that could assist the sermon is to be despised. Nevertheless, the essential thing is that the soul of the preacher should be so suffused,

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saturated, penetrated by the truth that, without despising or neglecting the best possible form, the preacher himself should feel overwhelmingly the power of the truth itself. The Old Testament prophet used forms not only for help in conveying his message, and as devices to aid the memories of his hearers, but mostly as vehicles for his richest power. He did not despise contemporary forms, nor did he set aside any method that would fix his message on the souls of people. He would go barefoot or naked through the streets of a city.<sup>28</sup> He would snatch off his girdle.<sup>29</sup> He would defy conventionality. Nevertheless, one reads the Old Testament prophet to little purpose if he fails to see behind all his literary or oratorical or sensational devices the flaming fire of the divine message in the soul of the preacher. Is not this what is needed today, this accent of life, this "burden" the prophet felt, this "fire in his bones"?<sup>30</sup> How else can one so well come to share this passion with prophet and apostle as by the kind of study we have insisted upon, by discovering mighty truth and human need for it? Compelled by our responsibility as teachers we can bathe our souls in precisely the same fountains of reality. Not only the vision of the truth itself, but the call of circumstances in which we live for the truth that has been revealed to us, will set our hearts aflame. This is what is meant by subjective homiletics, this penetration of our spirits by the spirit of reality. If as teachers we would bring people to share the enthusiasms of those whose

<sup>28</sup> Isa. 20 : 2, 3.

<sup>29</sup> Jer. 13 : 1-11.

<sup>30</sup> Jer. 20 : 9 ; 23 : 38 ; Mal. 1 : 1 ; Isa. 13 : 1 ; 14 : 28 ; etc.

utterances make our Bible, we can reach that ability through no other process than living again with those whose words send forth heat and light, though their voices have long been hushed in the progress of the ages.

Was not this precisely the secret of the glow that characterized the preaching of the New Testament times? Contact with life made the preachers vital and courageous. Our Lord chose Twelve to “be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach.”<sup>31</sup> Contagion from the Teacher was relied upon to produce fervor in the preacher. Not all at once did this effect follow, but it endlessly increased. What mighty courage filled Stephen’s soul as he reviewed national history, and felt the sin of the persistent refusal to cherish the spirit of receptivity until it reached its climax in the rejection of Jesus.<sup>32</sup> “Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.” The same glow is felt whenever we listen to Paul, or read his letters. There is a spiritual power, a bathing of words in his very life’s blood. He was no maker of essays, no rhetorical mechanic treating subjects in a dainty way. He brought life to bear upon life. Because he had not only yielded himself to the life he propagated, but made himself one with the life he would influence, he had a double vitality. Blessed is the studious preacher who so enriches himself by making his own the lives of those whose religious experiences are recorded in the Scriptures that his own soul is incandescent with the same illumination. Such is the real Scriptural preaching. It is not the

<sup>31</sup> Mark 3 : 14.

<sup>32</sup> Acts 7 : 51.

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phonographic repetition of Biblical language, nor the adherence to special types of teaching found in the Bible. It is a personality gleaming with the very same light and virile with the same vitality that filled all prophets and apostles when each one witnessed to divine reality in his day and generation. And this joy of preaching can come only to those who have studied these men of old moved by the Holy Spirit, and have come to open their lives to the same Spirit.

### III. INEVITABLE CHURCH EDUCATIONAL ATMOSPHERE

One of the inevitable results of emphasis upon the teaching function of the pastor will be a general church atmosphere. If he is faithful to his ideal in the treatment of the Scriptures, in the selection of his texts, in the character of his sermons, and in directing the affairs of his church school and young people's societies, there will be an educational atmosphere which cannot fail to be noticed. This does not mean that there will be a cold, icy intellectualism pervading the pulpit, the church school, and the various organizations in the church. Education as used throughout these lectures means the unfolding of the whole human personality, its thinking power, its spirit of love and service, its will in devotion and persistence, its social qualities, its moral possibilities. The ideal of Christianity is not suppression but expression. If the old Greek idea of self-realization be baptized into Jesus Christ it will express what the Master came to achieve. What could be more beautiful than to have a church known as striving in every department for this development

of personality and its relations? Is not this the very idea of salvation, a right relation to God and to our fellow men in this world, Jesus himself being the standard of these relations? Such an atmosphere is the native air in which a Christian church should live. Its ideals are those for which the church exists. If the preacher is devoted to a ministry like this his evangelism will rest upon an appeal to the whole personality. All pulpit teaching and work in the church school will be influenced by this conception. The institution will stand for these ideals, and will express them in a thousand ways.

When Jesus chose the Twelve, he had in mind at least three things. First, he became their Teacher. That was the name by which he was known. He gave them truth as they were able to bear.<sup>33</sup> Secondly, he sent them out to give expression to the truth that they understood. It was their practise of what they knew that most concerned him. And thirdly, and most of all, he chose them to be with him. They really learned more from contact with his person and from spiritual reality incarnated in him than they did from any other source. They got inspiration from that blessed association. Today our pedagogy is catching up with the divine Teacher. We are beginning to see that the three essential things are: Adapted instruction which can be assimilated; the practise of what has been taken into our lives; and the method of contagion, of fellowship for stimulus, courage, and perseverance. Where a pastor can make these ideas dominant in the life of his church, he is succeeding.

<sup>33</sup> Mark 4 : 33 ; John 16 : 12.

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After all, it is the man who makes the minister. It is not within the power of a college or a seminary to make him. These may cultivate qualities of manhood that constitute the real minister. Words cannot express the gratitude that the world should feel to institutions of learning for their development of men who seek the moral uplift of humanity. It is not by laying on of hands, or so-called "ordination," that ministers are made. There is no digital grace that can be conferred by one person upon another. Rites, ceremonies, and forms are the language of the soul, but they are not the causes of the vitalities of the spirit. It will rest with every man who aspires to the ministry to decide whether teaching in the noblest, highest sense shall be his function, or whether he shall spend his life in other ways that in the end do not count for the full, rounded unfolding of human life that can be secured only by the patient, consecrated teaching ministry of the pastor. Each of us has only himself to give to God and mankind. To give the best self possible is privilege as well as duty. We can make our very "high calling" contribute to the enlarging and enriching of ourselves. There is no way to do this more efficiently than in the ministry of a teaching pastor.

## LECTURE III

### HIS ONENESS WITH THE EDUCATED COMMUNITY

#### *The Teacher in the Early Church and His Successor*

In the early church there arose those who were called teachers. They were part of the manifold ministry and apparently devoted themselves exclusively to this function. They had the literature of the Old Testament in which probably only the Jewish Christians were specially interested. They also no doubt had early written Christian documents such as narratives concerning the life and teachings of our Lord,<sup>1</sup> and the *logia* of Matthew afterwards used in the Gospel that bears his name, and the written decision of the Council at Jerusalem,<sup>2</sup> and the growing Pauline correspondence with the churches. It would be easy for our imagination to picture groups of church-members meeting in various homes<sup>3</sup> and under the guidance of teachers studying the Old Testament and the rapidly increasing literature of Christianity. With what delight a new letter from Paul or any other apostle would be hailed! And when our Gospels appeared, what treasures they were to those early teachers and students! How churches would secure copies of the precious documents and meet with enthusiasm to study them under the leadership of the teachers! And when eye-witnesses of Jesus' life had passed away, and

<sup>1</sup> Luke 1 : 1, 2.

<sup>2</sup> Acts 15 : 23-29.

<sup>3</sup> Col. 4 : 15 et als.

those who like Polycarp had known an apostle had died, with what love the literary remains of the early church were cherished! Is it too much to assume that it was the teacher who deserves the credit for preserving and multiplying these pamphlets that were afterwards collected into our New Testament? They deserved the support that Paul urged should be given to them.<sup>4</sup> Their function was differentiated from that of the missionaries, and pastors and preachers.<sup>5</sup> They are also spoken of as among the "ascension gifts."<sup>6</sup>

It is not necessary here to describe minutely the particular service they rendered when there was but one church in a city and before Christians had grouped themselves into separate congregations independent of one another.

1. The early church considered religious instruction one of the two essential features of its mission.

2. It is believed that in his parting instruction to his disciples Jesus had specifically charged them with this work.

3. In providing for the successful prosecution of this task the church very soon produced a distinct class known as teachers, who were particularly responsible for the educational work of the church.

4. These teachers were given a definite standing in the ministry and were found throughout practically the whole church.

5. It was understood that this teaching ministry had been originated and appointed by the special activity of the Holy Spirit.

6. The teachers devoted themselves so exclusively to the work of instruction that they had to be supported at least in part by those among whom they labored and who received the benefit of their teaching.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Gal. 6 : 6.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Cor. 12 : 28.

<sup>6</sup> Eph. 4 : 11.

<sup>7</sup> Rev. J. W. Bailey, Ph. D., in the "Biblical World," Vol. XXXVIII, p. 58. The entire article on "The Teacher in the Early Church" is illuminating.

No seminary today emphasizes the preparation of fit men for this place in the life of the local church. Short-cut theological institutions are not at all concerned with this ministry. The products of such schools could hardly work efficiently in this service. We are making preachers, are concerned about administrators of church affairs, are emphasizing the sermon and pastoral service, but have hardly begun to appreciate the enormous value of the teaching function. True it is that there has been a great awakening in the sense of our duty to care for the young in genuine religious education, but there is hardly the same desire to produce men whose ministry is conspicuous for its teaching efficiency.

What has become of these teachers in the early church? They survive partly today in the faculties of our schools, but so far as the local church is concerned, only in the voluntary and for the most part untrained teachers in our church schools. A few churches who are financially able to do so have what are now called "Directors of Religious Education." These concern themselves with the management of the church school and young people's organizations and in training teachers. They are so few in number that there are scarcely enough to make even a small showing in any denominational statistical table. Probably the function which they seek to discharge would come closer to that of the "teacher" described in the New Testament than any other existing. This ministry of teaching was contemplated by our Lord in "the great commission" when he called upon the Twelve to go out and to preach and teach.<sup>8</sup> He himself was called "Teacher"

<sup>8</sup> Matt. 28 : 19.

oftener than by any other designation, and his followers were called "disciples," or learners.

There is no need for us to discount the work of the minister as preacher or pastor. These are necessary. Yet in the discharge of these functions we must not forget that the educational work of the pastor in the true sense is evangelistic in the highest meaning of the term. If it be objected that a teaching ministry adds to the load of an already overburdened man, we can only reply that under present conditions this is inevitable. Since churches are not financially able to have a specialized ministry and one man must do all the work, he must as well as possible seek to realize his manifold service.

## I. PRESENT FUNCTIONS OF THE TEACHING PASTOR

### 1. *Uplifting the Uneducated*

With this in mind, what position will the teaching pastor have among the educated persons in his community? He should not break with any class. His calling demands that he shall identify himself with all men.<sup>9</sup> If he thinks of his relation to those who have not had educational advantages, he will see that it is all the more necessary that one who has possessed them shall join himself hard to those who especially need the development that can come only through his teaching ministry. He is to help these, however, not by sacrificing his own high position, but by lifting up others to share with him the great things that God has given him. He cannot afford to break with the educated element in any community. These are the persons who really control

<sup>9</sup> 1 Cor. 8 : 19-23.

public sentiment. They are the men and women who have had educational advantages, who are teaching in the public schools and in higher institutions of learning. This body of persons is so numerous, and their influence so tremendous that no minister can afford to sacrifice his relations with them for the sake of becoming one with those who have not had such advantages. Nor is it necessary to do so. The vision of our Lord begirt with his towel and with the basin in his hand washing the feet of the Twelve in the upper room<sup>10</sup> illustrates the truth that the loftiest consciousness begets the lowliest acts. The mark of real men and women is that they are able to adjust themselves to those whose advantages have been less than their own, and to do this in such a way as not to produce the impression that they are condescending.

## *2. Identification With the Educated*

The teaching pastor automatically identifies himself with the intelligent element in the community. If he be such a one as is described in the previous lecture, this oneness will be apparent. Teachers will soon recognize the sameness between his view-points and theirs. Identity of methods will quickly be discovered. Teachers of literature will recognize that the teaching pastor is pursuing precisely the same historical methods in the study and teaching of the Bible that they follow in their classrooms. If a pastor appears only as an exhorter, or a functionary whose business it is to hold meetings, officiate at funerals and marriages, be a propagandist of dogmas and purveyor of pious entertainment, and a

<sup>10</sup> John 13 : 1-5.

kind of ecclesiastical decoration of public assemblies for making opening and closing prayers, whose mission it is to utter formalities miscalled invocations, and dismissions which are misnamed benedictions, it is hard to see how he can make his office an appeal to those whose lives are given to earnest study and honest effort to unfold all the capacities of human beings.

The minister can compel recognition by teachers only in so far as his own life and work identify him with the teaching fraternity. His very ministry should unite him completely with those who like himself are striving to develop and enlarge human personalities, to widen horizons, to help life breathe the world atmosphere, and to train human beings for the best possible living. It does not work against his recognition by the teaching fraternity that the minister is supremely concerned with moral and religious reality while other members of the teaching fraternity are busy with the intellectual or esthetic or physical or social development of the individual. The teaching preacher can easily profit by all that other teachers are doing, can reveal to the public that he is in the widest, truest sense an educator, and thus rank with the intellectual and the educational forces of the community. Where else should he find his rank? Should it not be normally the case that the students of a public school or college could listen to the sermons of a minister, or attend his lectures, or participate in the church school that he directs, and at once feel at home in finding that the methods of study pursued in the church are the same as those to which these students are accustomed in their studies in other literature? Is it asking too

much that teachers and professors in State institutions of all grades and in all our colleges should recognize in the interpretations of the Scriptures by the preacher, and in the instruction given in church-school classes identically the same scientific and ethically honest processes they are compelled to use in their own classrooms?

But, it may be objected, the Bible is different from English classics, or those of another tongue. Granted! Yet that difference is appreciated all the more when the same historical methods used in studying Shakespeare are used in Biblical study. Uniqueness can be discovered only in the effort to classify. There is no other way to recognize it. There is a vast difference between the faith, not to say credulity, that rests in the Bible as unique because some one else, or a creed, or an ecclesiastical authority has told us so, and the deep conviction borne in upon our souls because of the sane study of the book itself. Such study and teaching by the pastor and his people will cause that "faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."<sup>11</sup> Indeed, not the least of the causes for the indifference of the teaching profession to the marvelous literature we call the Bible has been that the assumptions, presumptions, and initial demands of its friends upon the scholarly classes have so offended their sanity that they have been repelled from genuine study of it. Allegorizing, fancifulizing, sheer assumption of double meaning as if an honest writer could use words in a double sense, as if religious teaching eschewed transparency and fell from grace into occult and cryptic expression, have

<sup>11</sup> 1 Cor. 2 : 5.

alienated thousands who did not and could not believe that God had given them common sense and culture of brains only to insult them in the name of the Giver. Yes, the Bible is different from other literature, but no one knows that difference so well, or appreciates it so thoroughly as the student who summons the whole of his sanity to understand the Scriptures. The teaching pastor is the only minister who can reach the teaching profession today, who can interest the annually growing product of our schools of all grades.

### 3. *Competent Interpretation of the Bible*

The teaching pastor will inevitably reach a position of authority so far as the knowledge of the Scriptures is concerned. No one today can be authority upon every matter. Those who serve the world are divided into specialists. The very development of life compels this. In medical realms, after years of training, specialists are expected to be able to give information concerning the human body, its normal activities, and the abnormalities that we call diseases. After long and severe discipline lawyers are supposed to know the principles of law, to be able to state great ideals which have been embodied in the development of justice. In other words, what a patient rightly expects from a physician with regard to his body, and a client reasonably expects from his lawyer with reference to business, the man at large should expect from the minister with regard to the teaching of the Scriptures and the ideals and processes of the moral and religious life. His rank in his sphere should not be less than that of professional or mercantile men

in their several realms. It is only when the pastor through the teaching ministry has revealed himself as worthy to hold such a position that he reaches a place of authority. The uneducated minister can seldom attain such a place with those who are the products of our institutions of learning. Some years ago the writer was informed of an overchurched town of about four thousand inhabitants in which there were forty men and women who had received earned degrees of various kinds from our best colleges and universities in the East and in the West. The appalling fact was that not one of the five pastors of churches in that town had ever seen the inside of a college or of a theological seminary. In other words, there were immediately about these ministers many influential citizens who had made themselves inhabitants of the great worlds of literature, science, art, and thinking, while the spiritual leaders in the community knew little or nothing of these vast realms, and were not even expert in their own specialty. Moreover, annually there was an output from the high school of young men and young women bent upon still further intellectual development. These had to go through their training without any glimpses of the affinity of religion with their culture in all realms, and without the stimulus that might have been theirs had they been shepherded in their mental and spiritual natures by pastors whose teaching was as valuable to their moral and religious lives as their high-school education was to their physical, intellectual, and social natures. The degree men and women of that town could consult libraries about history, science, and art, and the youthful incarnate interrogation-marks

could go to the high-school faculty for authoritative information concerning matters within their mental horizon; but who will say that those five pastors could speak as authoritatively about the Bible and religion as the lawyers, doctors, and teachers in their several spheres? One trembles to think of the enormous amount of misinformation possible under such circumstances. And beyond the conventional respect that the laity has for the clergyman, what must be the opinion of cultured citizens as to the educational function of ministers who are not qualified as teachers in their own specialty? The minister stands for Jesus Christ and his ideals and for the unfolding of Christian life as revealed in the Scriptures. These are the spheres in which he is to shine, and be as authoritative in his position as the lawyer, the doctor, the professor, and any others of the various social functionaries whose lives minister to the public good. No pastor can afford to stand aloof from the life he seeks to affect. Nor can he afford to be ignored by those who are giving their lives to the education of the young. Nor is he worthy of his high calling if he fails to qualify himself as thoroughly as possible for his position by becoming both authoritative in knowledge and Christ-like in life.

#### *4. Mediating Truth to Modern Life*

The teaching pastor who pursues the historical method of Bible study, and teaches accordingly, can mediate to a growing world the eternal truths of the Bible in such a way as will commend them to the appreciation and acceptance of the educated community. He will carefully distinguish between

vehicle and content. He will know the difference between the water of life and the gourd, or skin, or bucket, or chalice in which it came to thirsty souls. He will be able to disentangle the content from the temporary and accidental form, and to put the eternal ideal into a current contemporary form in which it will be easily assimilable. This was the master art of our Lord as a teacher. Every parable is a witness to his divine expertness in conveying new and unfamiliar truth through forms and expressions well known to his hearers. When he said,<sup>12</sup> "The Kingdom of heaven is like," it seems as if his mind was teeming with vehicles for the spiritual ideals that he would express. Was it not as if, to him, the kingdom was a vast sphere inclusive of all life's relations and processes, and all the so-called "secular" spheres of living like globules attaching themselves for the moment to the inside of the comprehensive globe, and their points of tangency furnishing splendid and forever priceless glimpses of the kind of living personal and social he came to establish? One cannot help wondering what he would do today in parables with this modern life so vastly richer than Oriental Palestinian life in his day. However fascinating the vehicle, it was only a transient carrier of an eternal truth. None can doubt that were the great Teacher living now he would use our twentieth-century life of which we are part, rather than require an archeological education in modern hearers by recurring to modes of life long since passed away. The intelligent pastor can retranslate the everlasting principles revealed in Biblical literature into modern terms.

<sup>12</sup> Matt. 7 : 24 ; 11 : 16 ; 13 : 24 ; 18 : 23 ; Mark 4 : 30 ; 13 : 28.

Is it not pitiful today when preachers identify the wagon with the food it contains, the words with the thoughts they seek to express, the garments with the person? All teaching pastors with correct viewpoints and methods will escape such a blunder as the effort to make men accept the accidental vehicle as equal in value with the essential truth. An educated element in a community by the very processes and results of its education long since learned to make this discrimination. Probably there is no closer union between vehicle and substance than that between thought and language. Nevertheless, the same thought can be expressed in each of the thousand and more dialects of the world as easily as a human body can change its clothes. Precisely what has taken place in all translations of the Scriptures where an idea expressed in a foreign tongue has been translated into vernacular speech, is happening when ideas and realities are being reinterpreted in each age, each race, and generation by teachers who know how to help their contemporaries. The great miracle of Pentecost is being repeated on a smaller scale wherever men of diverse history, temperament, antecedents, racial peculiarities, and conditions infinitely varied are hearing each "in his own language"<sup>13</sup> the same eternal truths. The aspiration to do this is deep in the soul of every true minister of Jesus Christ. He wishes to make "the truth as in Jesus"<sup>14</sup> intelligible and assimilable. The ability to do this depends upon his own facility to discover the reality in whatever accidental vehicle or historical form it has come to him;

<sup>13</sup> Acts 2 : 6.

<sup>14</sup> Eph. 4 : 21.

and also upon his acquaintance with the life around him, and his skill in taking the truth thus brought to him by his ability to disentangle the eternal from the transient, and through the use of current forms of life and thought to restate the great things he has discovered. Only the teaching pastor can do this with expertness. It is essential in his pedagogical ministry. Indeed, it is questionable whether there is a higher type of preaching than this very ability to teach eternal reality in contemporary forms. Every real sermon based upon the Scriptures is a severe homiletic exercise in this very art. Our Lord seldom exhorted. He stated spiritual reality to those who heard him in the terms of their own lives and of the processes of living with which they were familiar, and depended upon the spirit of God who broods over every heart to warm the ideals and ideas which he thus expressed into power to appeal to the will and the conscience with its attendant emotions. With him preaching was teaching. He took the very best out of the Old Testament and reshaped it for the life of his day. In addition he brought new conceptions, but was careful to give them in a way that could be easily understood. It is one thing for a minister to state a truth and exhort, appeal, and plead. God be thanked for all who do this! It is a different and more effective method to build into the human mind and conscience a great spiritual reality, and rely upon the Holy Spirit to make this a living and compulsory power in the lives of men. This latter way is that revealed to us in our modern processes of education. Those who have experienced the benefits of our colleges and universities can best be reached by the pastor who uses precisely the same processes

which educated men and women have pursued in their education for propagating the divine ideals and spiritual realities with which he in his ministry is exclusively concerned. The vernacular of our educated classes today is not that of the first century, nor medieval. Our thought forms are not those of the picturesque Orient. Our whole educational system is under the dominion of modern science. We cannot change it if we would. And the contemporary preacher would not if he could. We cannot be enthusiastic for our modern education, whole-hearted in devotion to our schools and colleges, and at the same time expect to impress faculties and students in these institutions that we profess to admire by presenting the truths the Scriptures contain in terms foreign to the conceptions and methods of the schools. The teaching pastor will be a real mediator, one with Jesus Christ, and also one with the educated people of his community. He will thus bring to those who are the beneficiaries of modern learning, who are also its apostles, the greater benefit of the heavenly realities God has unveiled and is continuously revealing. He will be the neck of the hour-glass through which will come to contemporaries and to posterity the opulent grains of past experience of God in life.

##### *5. Evangelization of the Cultured*

The evangelization of the educated community is not the least of the perplexing problems presented to the Christian church. It does seem as if the church has fallen into unfortunate conditions. The great world of labor is alienated. Many working men declare that the church has surrendered to the

moneyed interests and is under the dominance of capital. In many churches considered wealthy and fashionable there is not to be found a single wage-earner. Even if all our churches were composed of those whom we call working people, the need for the teaching pastor would be unspeakable. On the other hand, while there are many men and women of wealth who are earnest, active Christians, most of those who are rich in this world's goods have but slight connection with the spiritual interests of our churches. They are not found in prayer-meetings and church schools and at Sunday-evening services, and are seldom active in evangelistic enterprises. One after another these classes seem to have broken with our churches.

Today the divorce between the intellectual community and the church is conspicuous. Many who formerly were church-members have become alienated through their educational experiences. There should be no dearth of teachers in our church schools when we think of the vast numbers of those who have been trained in higher institutions of learning, and of the large number who belong to the teaching class. Yet it is recognized that the crucial problem in all our church schools is that of securing proper teachers. Shall the church make efforts to minister to the wage-earners and working people by standing for simple justice in the industrial world, and seek also to Christianize the wealth of the earth which is so essential for the establishment of the kingdom of God, to sustain its philanthropies and colleges, and to spread the gospel to the ends of the earth, and not seek to reach the educated elements in the com-

munity and bring their influence and talents into captivity to Jesus Christ? It is with this last problem that we are now concerned. It must be evident that the ignorant preacher has slim opportunity to reach this influential element of the community, and that the probability of his success is small. It is hard enough for the educated teaching pastor to do this most desirable work, but he has a thousand chances where any other kind of a preacher has one. There are many tangencies the educated teaching pastor can establish which are impossible to one whose ministry is not characterized by the teaching function. All the factors of a given community which make for its higher life should work together. How pitiful is the plight of any pastor in a parish where teachers, lawyers, doctors, and educated people with unbounded respect for one another and confidence in the culture, expertness, and highmindedness of one another fail to take into their group in their united service for the community the minister who represents the moralization of all life's processes and the spiritualization of all its ideals. A wide-open door to participation with these classes in all community enterprises is offered by the identification of the ministry with the teaching element in the community. There is hardly any limit to this service. Once in a while some outstanding character may be able by the sheer weight of his personality and the commanding influence of his position to become powerful and to attract the educated and the cultured. But for most of us ordinary beings, who must be content to work in comparative obscurity, the direct way to bring the gospel of Jesus Christ to the educated persons of a neighborhood and to

the teaching force of a community is by our identification with them. Such evangelism as will be effective, however, must be of a different type from that pursued by those who rely upon emotions or sensationalism, who depend upon appeals to fear or to feeling.

Modern education tries to do four things for the student, none of which is the mere impartation of information, which is a by-product. At the end of the process it asks, not "What does the graduate know?" but "What has he become?" These four aims of education are all essentially Christian. Our Lord insisted upon them all. They are:

First, *the enthronement of the passion for reality*. Only that is worthy of whole-hearted consecration. Tradition, sentiment, mere human authority, custom, and usage have no weight whatever against reality. The modern educated man "draws the thing as he sees it for the God of things as they are." The world has too long suffered from the enslaving influences of ignorance, error, and superstition. Education today is redemptive in that it is delivering humanity slowly but surely from bondage to that trinity of blights.

Again, *the educated man trusts himself to discover reality*. He is not content to accept anything simply upon the assertion of others. He reserves the right to investigate for himself. True it is that where he has confidence in those who are qualified in their several realms for thorough investigation he is willing to accept statements. Nevertheless, he has not surrendered his right to investigate for himself if he desires to do so. The highest degree given at a modern college, that of Doctor

of Philosophy, simply means that the recipient has proved that he knows how to use his own powers in the search for reality.

Again, *our modern education insists upon the open mind*. There is hardly anything more irksome to the truly educated modern man than the demand that something shall be protected from his research, or that any matter be closed, or that he is not at liberty to change his mind if facts compel him to do so. The thought of finality as already achieved is distasteful. We must be free to study anything whatsoever, and we must have open minds to receive any new light that God may send upon anything whatsoever. Education does not produce hermetically sealed souls. In our punctuation of thinking we have use for commas when we take fresh breaths, for semicolons to indicate our classifications so far as we have been able to make them, for interrogation-marks for use of inquiring spirits, for exclamation-points to indicate our delights or disappointments, for multitudes of asterisks and dashes to show our ignorance, but no use for periods. These are the sealed locks that prejudices or preconceptions put upon opinions. "Most men's conclusions are the places where they grow tired of thinking."

Once more, *modern education stimulates the social consciousness*. The pursuit of knowledge is a social matter. No man can claim to have established his contentions beyond the right of others to test his conclusions. One of the most beautiful and stirring visions of progress in knowledge is the way in which investigators in all realms work together, test one another's experiments and researches, and stand together in adherence to results which have

been obtained by proper methods, and use their results for the common good.

This brief description of what an educated person is today will raise certain questions concerning the ministry of a preacher who wishes to bring into the lives of educated people the eternal realities of Jesus Christ. We soon discover that these four characteristics of an educated person are essentially Christian. Only reality emancipates. All else enslaves. If God be the supreme Reality he can build no kingdom anywhere upon any other foundation. In religion Jesus declared that he was the reality.<sup>15</sup> In the words of our Lord,<sup>16</sup> "The truth shall make you free," there is reflected the enthusiasm for reality and the profound ethical passion involved in the pursuit of it. The trust of ourselves to discover reality is also involved in the statement of our Lord,<sup>17</sup> "The light of the body is the eye." Our entire rational nature functions in the pursuit of truth. The whole being is involved. The light that is in us illuminates what comes into our souls. We must trust ourselves and must carefully guard all powers of our being so that we may understand and appreciate the light that comes from the Father of lights. "The pure in heart see God"<sup>18</sup> here and now. Moreover, Jesus insisted upon the open mind as the very first condition of entering into the kingdom of God. "Unless you turn and become as little children, you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven."<sup>19</sup> No man has ever entered any kingdom with which God has

<sup>15</sup> John 14 : 6.

<sup>16</sup> John 8 : 32.

<sup>17</sup> Matt. 6 : 22, 23 ; Luke 11 . 34-36.

<sup>18</sup> Matt. 5 : 8 ; cf. Titus 1 : 15.

<sup>19</sup> Matt. 18 : 3.

to do without this spirit of receptivity. Jacob did not win Canaan by cunning, but only as Israel upon his knees. Prejudices, preconceptions, prepossessions, closed hearts, and sealed souls prevent entrance into any of God's kingdoms. Like little children with wide-open minds we must receive the gifts in all God's realms, most of all in spiritual things. We need not dwell upon our Lord's insistence upon the social consciousness. The entire ministry of Jesus, as well as many direct sayings, reveals the fact that no man lives unto himself.

Here are four vital points of tangency between the educated preacher and the teaching classes in our schools and the cultured elements in our communities. If the ministry of the teaching preacher will demonstrate his passion for reality as over against the mere acceptance of traditions, will show that he is not afraid to trust himself in the pursuit of spiritual reality, will exhibit a continuously open mind, and will give himself unstintedly to the life of disinterested service, he will have close contacts with the really educated. Our blessed religion not only permits but requires precisely these four things upon which modern education insists. The teaching pastor through these tangencies will find open doors to commune with teachers upon the claims of Christ on their lives. Surely none who ignore or defy these four things may hope to influence truly educated persons. Pulpit ravings against science and its teachers reveal ministerial shallowness.

#### *6. Recruiting Teaching Forces in Religion*

The ministry is universal. "According as each received a gift, ministering it among yourselves,

as good stewards of God's manifold grace." <sup>20</sup> Why should not the vast army of teachers in our public schools and colleges consecrate their special gifts to the millions of adults in our churches and of children in church schools? Since teaching is known to be vastly different from parrotlike repetition of language, as in Moslem schools for promoting knowledge of the Koran, the skill of those who by profession are expert could be of untold service to all connected with churches. Why should not this gift be seized upon for religious education? Surely the methods expertly used in teaching literature in grammar schools would be as productive of good results with pupils of the same ages in teaching the Bible in church schools. Already there are many kindergartens in churches whose teachers bring to the moral and ethical development of the little ones the same methods they use in the week-day schools. High-school teachers expert in dealing with adolescents in secular studies could accomplish wonders with the same youth in teaching sacred literature. And there is reason to believe that far larger numbers of adults would attend Bible classes on Sundays and week-days if these were taught by men and women whose standing in the educational world would guarantee thorough instruction. If the lives of enough teachers could be won to serve Christ and men, and their equipment and professional skill were sincerely consecrated to instruction in our churches and their schools, the entire complexion of religious educational work would be changed for the better. This is in no sense a plea for professionalism in Sunday schools, nor in religious education.

<sup>20</sup> 1 Peter 4 : 10.

Biblical instruction could never be given in public schools by unconverted, unsympathetic teachers. The essential moral and religious qualification would be lacking. It would be a farce. No less would that be true in the Sunday school. But the finest thing for our church schools would be an ample supply of Christian teachers whose view-points and methods have been recognized by standard educational tests as the best, consecrating their gifts in the ministry of religious education. The union of Christian love and enthusiasm with psychological and pedagogical skill would be ideal. There are many such now at work, yet their number is very small compared with the need. How can this number be increased? The teaching pastor holds the key to the solution of the problem. In some cases teachers who would be glad to serve cannot work with pastors whose attitudes and methods do not comport with those of the educational world. In far more cases these teachers have quietly dismissed the thought of consecrating their gifts in religious instruction. And, alas, it is to be feared that in more instances than can be estimated the whole attitude and conception of churches and ministers has been such as to alienate members of the teaching fraternity from the church as a whole because of hostility to modern learning, insistence upon outgrown creedal tests, condemnation of scientific conclusions, and mistaken characterization of schools as godless. The educated pastor who will exercise a teaching ministry can do much to remove these difficulties and open the way for most efficient additions to the teaching forces of his church. Though the field of instruction may differ from that of the public school and college,

the methods will be the same, and with the blessing of God the results would compare favorably in religious education with those of the secular schools in their work. Here is a promising field for the teaching pastor.

Such are at least some of the offices that a teaching pastor can render to one element in the community. There can be no question that a specific ministry to that element is needed as much as to any other. Because of the special function of teachers in shaping young life, and of the educated in their influence over life in general, it is of great importance that religion shall have its power over their lives. The Book of all others should not be buried beneath the avalanche of literature of all kinds now rolling from presses that stop not day nor night. Who but pastors competent by training, and devoted to giving the Scriptures their right place in religion and in general culture, can render this service to those who mold personal and social life as does the educated element in the community? The work is peculiar and more than any other calls for oneness between the pastor and the cultured part of the community life. All factors of social life are to be evangelized; none can be left out of any plans that are as large as Christ's conception of his kingdom. None can say that any factor is more important than any other. The industrial, financial, esthetic, artistic, literary, and educational groups alike come within the hunger of the Saviour who came to bring all into right relation to the heavenly Father and to one another. Yet if means must be suited to ends in order to achieve results, the edu-

cated minister whose idea of service includes teaching the Bible, will necessarily have special responsibilities for trying to reach those who like himself have devoted themselves to teaching, and also those who have had the blessings of education in modern schools.

## LECTURE IV

### HIS MINISTRY TO THE YOUNG

#### *Young People Must Live Out Their Own Lives*

Necessarily the pastor must deal with all ages. He must serve life in all stages. A vast variety of needs will present itself to him. We are concerned now with growing life. The ministry to the young is of special importance. Careers lie before those whose past years are few. To shape the lives of tomorrow is a work of great responsibility. Today we discard notions derived from figures based upon the plasticity of youth. We no longer seek to mold life as if it were clay or putty, impressing ourselves upon youthful life to make it in our own image, and denting it with our own peculiarities. We regard young life rather as a vine with its own vitality, present human experience as a trellis, and stimulate the plant to develop according to its own nature. Every young life conscious of itself feels as did David in his teens when the traditionalists put Saul's armor upon him. He uttered immortal words<sup>1</sup> which should be graven deep in the consciousness of every young person: "I cannot go in these." No human being can kill giants with the equipment of another. His own sling and stone are worth far more than all the accouterment from the arsenals of another. David fought a great battle between

<sup>1</sup> 1 Sam. 17 : 39.

originality and conventionality. It occurred in his own soul. The world is moved forward only when originality wins in the contest with conventionality. What has served its purpose in the past does not necessarily achieve results in a new day with changed conditions and fresh antagonists. This characteristic spirit of youth claims the skilful attention of the pastor. We may not make illustrative excursions into the fields of practical life, for our concern now is specially with the teaching function of the minister. Each generation must live out its own life. Each soul is God's real estate<sup>2</sup> tilled by all the past and yet enriched by its own contemporary life and personal efforts. Each generation hands on to its successor the wealth of the past increased by its own attainments.

## I. DISCOVERIES CONCERNING RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

### 1. *Neglected in Most Homes*

No intelligent pastor can long be the servant of any group of people who does not make certain important discoveries concerning both old and young with regard to the knowledge of the Scriptures.

Education in the knowledge of the Bible is virtually ignored in the home. Parents no longer exercise the mediatorial priestly function. The good old days when the family gathered around the parent who conducted household worship seem to have vanished. This beautiful and helpful service at least produced an impression upon the lives of the

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. 3 : 9. Cf. Deut. 32 : 9 ; Jer. 10 : 16, where the word for farm has developed into a name for Israel.

children which all subsequent experiences did not efface. There was only the devotional use of the Bible, but much of its language stuck to memory, and in after years certain words and conceptions of the Scriptures came out of the storehouses of memory and achieved important results in the lives of the mature. In only a few homes relatively has even this praiseworthy custom continued. Now there is little or no Biblical instruction in the home. However, more than a decade ago, mothers are reading Bible stories to their children. Books have been issued which tell these narratives so far as possible in the very words of the Bible. Children who read these stories or listen to them are becoming acquainted with incidents and persons in Biblical history. Occasionally some interested mothers and far fewer interested fathers take the time to go over the church-school lessons with their boys and girls, and try to help their children to obtain a knowledge of the Scriptures. Probably such parents are now learning more than they ever knew before by such aid to their offspring. So far as adult study of the Scriptures in the home is concerned, it is to be feared that very little is now done. Books which give aid to an intelligent study of the Bible have not yet found a place in many home libraries, nor are they read by Christian fathers and mothers as eagerly as the latest novel. Why should not parents who help their children with lessons assigned by the public school, with equal enthusiasm aid their children in studying the lessons given by the church school? We do not refer to classes of boys and girls organized for catechetical instruction with reference to church-membership. We are confining our-

selves wholly to a real study of the Scriptures. To no appreciable extent are homes factors in promoting the same real study of the Scriptures that is given to history and literature in lessons assigned by the public schools for home study.

## 2. *Unsatisfactory in Many Church Schools*

The efforts of the church school are mostly unsatisfactory in spite of the tremendous advances made in the last quarter of a century. Very often boys and girls are forced to go, and find themselves in the church school with a reluctant spirit that is essentially unreceptive. Far too often indifferent parents indulge their children, and absences from the church school are regarded with complacency. The equipment of the school is not such as to make the pupil enthusiastic. The teachers yet constitute the main problem. Often these are for the most part well-meaning, pious people, who, without training or any proper knowledge of the Bible themselves seek to comment upon passages in sermonets for the purpose of impressing moral lessons, or who strive for letter-perfect recitation of catechisms, or who have gone through various so-called "lesson helps" and mentally scissor hortatory patches from these to make a sort of homiletic crazy quilt to throw over youthful souls that they vainly imagine are shivering with the chilliness of ignorance or the icy darkness of sin. Let us cheerfully grant that all who undertake this work, even without training, deserve the highest praise for the motives they have and the efforts they make to help others into knowledge of the way of life. The object of the church school today prevailingly seems to be evangelization

through appeal rather than through education, to persuade the pupils to join the church through various kinds of importunities, rather than so to present the truth that by its own power under the brooding of the Holy Spirit it shall seize upon the hearts of the pupils. Think of the olden days when there was a uniform lesson system and precisely the same ten verses of the Bible were presented to the little tots ten years old and the grown folks as well. Often these selections from visions of Ezekiel or of the Apocalypse were made to do duty for all ages, from infants to those approaching second childhood, without reference to differences of experience or ability. A happier day came upon us when graded lessons were introduced. Nevertheless, in spite of efforts to make the church school a real school, thoroughly educational in its processes and results, the overwhelming majority of our schools have not yet responded to this ideal, which indeed is not yet appreciated by a very large proportion of them.

### *3. Superior Equipment and Methods of State Schools*

Compare these institutions with the public schools of all grades. Contrast lesson leaflets, too often cheap in material and character, with handsomely illustrated and well-bound text-books. Over against thoroughly trained teachers set the well-meaning volunteers who know comparatively little about what they are to teach and the psychology and pedagogy of instruction. Contrast the voluntary and tardy attendance on Sundays with compulsory, punctual presence on week-days. Set side by side the scanty church-school equipment, which is little

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more than a shelter, and the handsome, attractive, well-furnished, and adequate buildings for the training which the State is giving to its wards. Compare the methods of instruction pursued by the untrained Bible teachers with those followed by instructors in State schools. Think of the difference between all kinds of apparatus at the disposal of the scholar in the public schools and an almost utter deficiency of maps, blackboards, stereopticon pictures, material for making models, and all other facilities for making indelible impressions upon the minds of the scholars.

Is it any wonder that the same people who attend public schools five days in the week and go to the church schools for an hour and a half on Sunday, receive these impressions: that botany, chemistry, biology, geography, history, and everything else they study on week-days is worthy of the best that can be provided by taxation to enable them to learn and to train their minds in the processes of acquiring knowledge, but that a knowledge of the Bible, Christ-like character, right social relations, and Christianity itself is content with careless methods, meager equipments, inadequate text-books, untrained teachers, and the absence of anything that will compare with the equipment of the day-school? Is it a wonder that the young come to feel that the State is generously eager to produce intelligent citizens while the Church is willingly parsimonious in efforts to produce intelligent Christians? Will not the young person also be impressed with the fact that in the public schools he is taught to observe facts, to have a sense of their majesty, and to draw his own inferences from facts, while in the church

school he is expected to receive certain statements upon an authority which he may not interrogate? Undaunted and unafraid, he attacks every subject brought to him in the public school, and is encouraged to think for himself. In the church school his teachers are apt to tell him that the interrogation-mark must be omitted from his mental furniture. Is it not true that on Sundays religion seems to come to him sealed with an inviolable stamp, while on week-days all other knowledge is open to him and insists upon the spirit of free inquiry? How seldom he is urged to have the mood of the simple shepherds of Bethlehem who said <sup>3</sup> in the face of words from heaven and the vision in the skies, "Let us now go all the way to Bethlehem, and see this thing that has come to pass." In other words, does the church school supply the same inspiration and have the same insistent demands for personal investigation in the study of the Bible that are noticeable in secular education? Although it may not be sufficiently clear to find expression in language, this contrast is mentally made by our boys and girls. It is felt and acted rather than spoken. Soon the work of the church school comes to take a lower place in the esteem of young people than that of the public school.

#### *4. Influence of the Non-academic Curriculum*

Let us also think of what we may call the non-academic curriculum in which all our young people are being more or less educated. Life outside of the home, the public school, and the church school is constantly playing upon the lives of the young and

<sup>3</sup> Luke 2 : 15.

bringing hardly any suggestion of devotion to spiritual reality.<sup>4</sup> Newspapers, magazines, novels, billboards, movies, entertainments, sports, companionships, the radio, and a thousand other things are pouring their contributions toward character into the souls of young people, and in hardly any of these does there appear the slightest inducement for study of the Bible. Literature of many kinds presents itself for perusal, while the Bible is thrust aside and its study is considered optional. Alas, that any parent should ever punish a child for reading some forbidden book or for any other misconduct by compelling the boy or girl to read so many chapters in the Bible! What possible good could such a discipline accomplish when the reading of the Scriptures becomes punitive? With what kind of spirit would any real red-blooded young person read the Bible as a matter of discipline except that of reluctance, repugnance, and the desire to have a disagreeable experience ended as soon as possible? Not in this repugnant way do the truths of Scripture soak into the souls of young people. What, let us ask, is the total educational effect of all these non-academic experiences which play upon the lives of growing boys and girls? We might ask identically the same question concerning the adults. Is it not too true, alas, that all these things work against specific efforts which are making for the religious education of young people and for the promotion of their taste for a knowledge of the Scriptures? How can they come to love the Bible when the perusal of it is used for punishment, or when life and time are so crowded with countless diverting

<sup>4</sup> Matt. 13 : 22.

things, that they do not have nor will they take time for acquaintance with the highest and best that history has given?

### *5. Inevitable Results of These Conditions*

The inevitable results of these legacies of the past and of present conditions is a falling away from attendance upon the church school and a weakening of control by the home at the very period of life when these are most needed. When well into the adolescent stage other interests so appeal to the young that it has come to be thought rather beneath the dignity of the growing person to attend the church school. The Bible is regarded as a queer literature not to be studied as other literature. Interest in the spiritual life ranks below that in sports and social activities. Diligence is given to high-school studies and to preparation for college because of inherent interest or of necessity to attain an objective, and soon the church school has lost its grip. Nor does the work of young people's organizations compensate for this disaster. Their emphasis is not upon the knowledge of the Scriptures so much as upon problems of practical life, contemporary occurrences, and the questions that concern the soul developing in this period of physical, mental, and social ferment. How far our present experiences in these matters are due to the past is a question into which we cannot go. Even if we could thoroughly explain current deflections, that would not correct them. Furthermore, we must remember that our modern ideals of religious education and the methods of securing a knowledge of the Scriptures that have displaced those which

formerly existed, have not yet had one generation of life in which to test the efficiency of these newer methods. It is partly because of our higher ideals and better methods, and partly because of changes in life's conditions and diversions, that we are confronted with the situations barely outlined.

## II. THE SERVICE OF THE PASTOR

### 1. *Anticipating College Tests of Church-school Work*

What then can the teaching pastor do in this state of affairs? If he really be a lover of young life, his longing will be to bring youth into possession of the ideals of the Bible which shall dominate their lives in all relations.

He should remember that the education in the church school will be tested by college life. Deficiency in the knowledge of the Scriptures, even so far as their language is concerned, has been amply attested by examinations of those who have entered college life. Said a young man not long since, "I could wish either that there had been no Bible, or that the great writers of literature had made no allusion to it." He had been forced to reveal his ignorance of the Scriptures, and therefore the fact that he could not read intelligently certain great masters in the field of English literature. This is sad enough, though it disclosed only a lack of acquaintance with the language and characters of the Bible. Worse than this, however, is the fact that such ignorance inevitably proves that there is no knowledge of the meaning and message of the Biblical books. The college test was only the trifling

storm that revealed the foundation of sand in the inability to read English literature understandingly. Worse storms play upon the souls of young men and young women and produce far more damaging wrecks than those in the realm of English literature. The pastor can make it his business to anticipate these judgment days that come not only in college examinations in literature, but far more in the tests of daily life and the temptations that are sure to arise from social environment. To have ignorance revealed is only mortifying. To have a soul unfortified by moral buttresses assailed by temptations is alarming. Some colleges admit matriculates upon certificate of graduation by high schools. This means only that a good foundation has been laid for the freshman year's work. Is it too wild a question to ask whether the time will ever come when a certificate of graduation from a church school will signify to a denominational college that its possessor has some knowledge of the Bible, and is also ethically and religiously desirable as a matriculate? Before that time comes our church schools must make great progress. Do we dare to hint that any well-organized system of denominational education will seek to standardize its church schools, as well as seek recognition for its colleges in standardized State schemes of education? Teaching pastors are the only agencies that can remove the reproach of ignorance concerning the Bible that hinders our youth from becoming intelligent students of literature in our mother tongue. When writers of classic literature, and novelists, and contributors to magazines, and even editors of daily papers use quotations from the Bible, and make allusion to its events

and characters, is it not a shame that products of church schools cannot understand their references? They should at least read literature intelligently.

## 2. *Guarding Against Teaching That Must Be Unlearned*

The teaching pastor can also see that there is no teaching that must be eventually unlearned. Why should a child grow up to experience the dreadful shock of discovering that his information and training have been mistaken? He will soon come to have a contempt for an institution that has fed his growing mind upon conventional conceptions, when those who are the purveyors of spiritual truth have given him things that he must cast aside. In his high school and college career he will surely learn that the history of our physical universe and of our planet has been turned over to the sciences of astronomy and geology, and that the story of man's origin and development has been committed to anthropology and kindred sciences. When he faces the modern view of the physical universe and of man, and finds that he must either abandon the Bible as a source of scientific knowledge of anything whatever, or if he clings to the error that the Bible was intended to teach science and history and that he must throw away what his schools teach, what horrible alternatives present themselves to his mind! It is more than foolish, it is wicked to tell youth that it must accept the crude, unscientific ideas of the Bible concerning psychology, anthropology, cosmogony, or other matters relating to the material world or else reject the Bible as a whole.<sup>5</sup> The Bible

<sup>5</sup> See Article on "Ancient Hebrew Science," by Allen Howard Godbey, Ph. D., in "Methodist Quarterly Review" for January, 1923.

was not meant to teach any sort of science, nor history. Biblical writers used current ideas prevailing in their times as vehicles for religious and moral conceptions. They employed historical material for preaching purposes without anxiety as to its historical accuracy.<sup>6</sup> For church schools to ignore facts is unethical. To try to force our progressively intelligent youth to believe untrue theories as to the Bible, or to conceal from maturing rational natures the real nature of the Scriptures, is to prepare young people for inevitable personal pain in discarding errors conscientiously believed, and to insure disgust for persons and institutions that cause them such experiences. The teaching pastor who really knows his Bible can prevent all this by seeing that the boys and girls in his congregation are never taught what they will have to unlearn. It is hard to root out a mistake. It is wiser to implant a truth. Pulling up tares also injures the wheat,<sup>7</sup> said Jesus. No one has a moral right to build an error into the mind of a growing human being and cause that person in later years to experience the mental and spiritual pain of casting out the error. In religion we cannot feed the growing mind upon fairy tales with a certainty that afterward the adult will escape the agony of unlearning and safely glide into the reality. Not so is the course of religious instruction. The teaching pastor will see that this calamity is prevented and will guard against such a tragedy in the religious experiences of growing youth. The enthusiasm of faith, if not belief itself, is rudely shocked by such needless jolts.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. 1 Sam. 21 : 9 and 2 Sam. 21 : 19 ; and other illustrations.

<sup>7</sup> Matt. 13 : 29.

### *3. Preventing Moral Shock in Educational Development*

He can also prevent the moral shock that will inevitably come to the misinstructed person when he enters into wider regions of knowledge during a college course. How calamitous this is, and how it vitally affects the future of those who experience it! At a certain college under denominational auspices the visiting preacher one evening talked individually with eighteen young men. The consecutive interviews lasted until the early morning. Every one of these eighteen was either a junior or a senior. Sixteen of the eighteen had entered college with the view of becoming ministers of the gospel. Every one of these had abandoned his purpose. The seventeenth young man came to ask how as a teacher of his Greek letter fraternity Bible class he could pursue the same methods of historical study of the Bible that were employed in the classrooms of the university where literature was taught. The eighteenth young man came to talk about the possibility of entering the ministry. His initial question was, "Can I enter the ministry and retain my intellectual self-respect as it has been developed by my university experience?" He was urged not to enter the ministry if it meant the forfeiting of that self-respect. What was the trouble with these young men? It was not due to university training. They had come from churches where the ministers were pious enough, and thoroughly Christian, and passionately eager to bring young life into church-membership. But these pastors had not been impressed with the sacred obligation of a teaching ministry. They had allowed to come into the minds of

these fine young fellows conceptions of the Bible itself and ideas of incidents in the Bible which were inevitably destined to be overthrown when these young men came into contact with modern educational experiences and methods in a first-class university. They abandoned the ministry because in their home churches, presided over by men who had led them to join the church, they had seen in the pastor himself no evidence of a knowledge of the very things they had come to know as reality, much less any ability to integrate genuine Biblical knowledge that was not possessed by their good pastors with the realities discovered in their college life. There were sixteen cases where tradition and bondage to unintelligent conceptions of the Bible had been shivered by contact with the truth. The holy purposes for their lives had been abandoned, and there was none to save. Does this one experience throw light upon the dearth of men in the ministry? Let us not blame our educational institutions. The fault lies further back. It lies with pastors who will not realize their obligations for the teaching ministry. Moreover, if one temporary college pastor had in a single night such an experience with sixteen young men, what would be the situation at all colleges if the truth were known? The abundance of our ministerial supply is partly in the keeping of intelligent pastors who know how to exercise a teaching ministry. In the face of facts like these let us not mourn because our seminaries are not crowded and pastors for churches are scarce, but let us send out those who know how to avert the tragedies indicated and to see that young people going from their churches into secondary schools

and universities shall have such a conception of the Scriptures and of the religious realities they were intended to convey, that there shall be no shock when these young people come to study sciences and are made the beneficiaries of our educational ideals as outlined in the previous lecture. This integration of true knowledge of the Bible with the knowledge that comes through so-called secular education is one of the holiest obligations in a pastor's relations with his people.

#### *4. Welcoming College Graduates When They Return Home*

There is also the vital problem of the return of the young man or woman from the college to the home church. How often they look forward with pleasure to resuming social relations in their home towns, but with dread to returning to church connections. The home-church atmosphere they left has become stale compared with the one that is fresher and richer and more congenial to their cultured lives. With what kind of a reception will they meet? Will there be a place for the attitudes they have acquired and methods they have pursued and the deep altruistic ambitions that have arisen in their hearts? Will there be hospitality for them? Will they have to return to a group yet under the dominion of ideas and conceptions which these young people have thrown aside for what is better? Must they return to the stifling air of conventionality, or will there be room for them to breathe the atmosphere of reality? This is a fundamental question. Just here lies the explanation of the fact that so many graduates of our colleges and universities when they return to

their homes, have a merely nominal connection with their churches. What should the teaching pastor say to his congregation? Let him give this message: "You men and women put your hands into your pockets four times partly or wholly for educational purposes. First, you pay taxes, part of which goes to support a State scheme of education which begins with the kindergarten and ends with the State university. A second time you contribute to found, support, and endow denominational schools. You do well, for they have an important function in the religious life of young people. The plastic, adolescent period of life is concurrent with the beginning of a college career, and this is the time when religious impressions can be implanted indelibly. State schools do not dare to attempt evangelistic or religious efforts. A third time you put your hands in your pockets to send your sons and daughters to these State or denominational schools which you by taxes and gifts have founded and are supporting. It costs you something to put into the minds and lives of your children the things for which education stands. You dare not deny them the advantages which a college career gives except at the awful expense of their advantageous future. Will you a fourth time put your hands in your pockets to pay for the salary of an uneducated, incompetent minister who will denounce as godless the very schools which your taxes and gifts have established and which you have patronized at such heavy expense, and compel your cultured sons and daughters upon their return from college either to stay away from the church if they wish to maintain their intellectual self-respect, or if they attend

from a sense of filial obligation, to leave their intellectual self-respect with their umbrellas in the corridor?" This is a vital problem. The solution lies with the minister who can bring to the very flower of his people, the educated adults, and the fresh, beautiful life of cultured young men and women the reality revealed in the Bible in such a way as to integrate itself with the culture of these young people.

### 5. *Helping Those Without Educational Advantages*

We have been thinking of young people who have the experiences of school life. What of those whose circumstances prevent their enjoyment of such privileges? Do they not need even more than others the same care? In countless thousands of cases the church not only must be the source of religious comfort and help, but also must furnish social contacts, and very frequently is the only educational factor in their lives. The very misfortunes that compel many to abandon all hope of educational opportunities, only emphasize more keenly the need for such an education in the knowledge of the Scriptures as the church and the church school can bring. It is interesting to discover that in some of these lives the hunger for a real knowledge of the Bible is more keen than with many who have been able to complete the high-school courses or to enter colleges. About all such lives there play the diversions of leisure hours. Their literary food comes mostly from daily papers and such periodicals as may come to their homes. Not the least-interesting fact is that often in their business occupations there are conversations about religious matters and discus-

sions concerning the meaning of the Bible. They hear and also read many statements which are misleading and give them mistaken conceptions of the Scriptures. Is it not of the utmost importance that to these the teaching pastor shall see that there is given, through every avenue possible, accurate instruction concerning the Bible? Indeed, the best-qualified teachers should be in charge of classes of such persons. There is no reason why they should not become thoroughly acquainted with the nature of Biblical literature and the messages of the sacred writings. Any person of average intelligence can easily grasp the facts. Volume after volume of most helpful literature in Biblical study has been issued. Even where it is not possible for persons to purchase these books, well-equipped church schools can buy them and lend them to the pupils as is now done in our public schools. Even public libraries can be induced to place them on their shelves. The time has long since passed when any one can plead either poverty or a lack of education as an excuse for ignorance. Let us not forget that the uneducated should appeal all the more powerfully to the unselfish motives of those who know. Such persons should be lifted out of the danger of untrue conceptions of the Bible and saved from moral shock which will inevitably come, through the leadership of those who have been misinformed. It has been demonstrated beyond doubt that, without regard to any school advantages, the main facts concerning the Scriptures and the vital truths that influence life are easily appreciated by any person of average intelligence. What more gracious service could a pastor render than to gather such young men and women

into classes on Sundays or week-nights to be led by thoroughly competent persons whose spirit of love will find keenest joy in leading them into the green pastures and beside the still waters of divine truth?

### 6. *Promoting Educational Evangelism*

The teaching pastor will also promote educational evangelism.<sup>8</sup> Each child is born with religious as well as physical, social, and intellectual capacity. Adults unfold these according to methods and ideals that human experience has attained. Educational evangelism proceeds according to the religious experiences of the race. We do not mean the mere imparting of information, but the unfolding of the religious capacity. That process never ceases. On this native human capacity the Holy Spirit relies in all his appeals to the human heart, no matter what the avenue of approach or the instrumentality used. Upon this same ability of the soul all evangelistic effort relies. The foreign missionary in his appeal to the savage heart also depends upon it. Jesus himself rested his hope of reaching his contemporaries upon the same essential basis. It was to the "common people" that he said,<sup>9</sup> "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not." He said that common sense capable of judging weather signs was adequate enough to make spiritual decisions.<sup>10</sup> He is the true light "which lights every man."<sup>11</sup> Educational evangelism believes utterly that moral changes wrought in human beings are due to the

<sup>8</sup> See article by the writer in Official Report of the Sixteenth International Sunday School Convention, Kansas City, Missouri, June 21-27, 1922, pp. 129-134. Published by International Sunday School Council of Religious Education, Chicago, Ill.

<sup>9</sup> John 10 : 37.

<sup>10</sup> Matt. 16 : 1-3.

<sup>11</sup> John 1 : 9.

Spirit of God brooding over souls. Conversion is that experience, gradual or sudden, when the moral, religious, and ethical capacities of a human being dominated by Jesus Christ control all other capacities, physical, intellectual, and social, in all realms of life. There is no other sort of conversion worth thinking about. The methods of educational evangelism are very simple. They are the impartation of assimilable truth, the expression of that truth in life, and association with those who have had the experience of conversion. The teaching pastor has his great opportunity here. More and more truth and the soul which belong to each other, can be brought together. There will come a time when the soul will yield to the truth, especially if the growing life of the young is taught to practise so much of the truth as has been assimilated, and is surrounded by others who likewise live the spiritual reality they know. Such a ministry provided for in the conduct of the church school should result in a steady influx of the young into the church-membership because of the confessions of faith in the Christ who has increasingly been brought near to the young lives through intelligent presentation of his life. He always draws us when he is lifted up.<sup>12</sup> It is possible from the very beginning of a child's entrance into the church school so to introduce the pupil to the great Teacher that the desire to learn from and to follow him will become growingly strong until a public avowal of discipleship becomes as natural as the blooming of a plant or the ripening of fruit. This ideal should be the normal one with all church schools, rather than the extraordinary and spas-

<sup>12</sup> John 12 : 32.

modic methods to which revivalism resorts in its appeals to those who have not had such wise training. It should be as natural and easy for a child to go from a Christian home and a properly conducted church school into church-membership, as for the moonlight to give place to sunshine. The gospel narratives show us the progress of men who first became disciples of the great Teacher, and through years of steady development became apostles and writers of gospels. Why not expect the same process to be repeated with the same Teacher and the same truth, and the same Holy Spirit to energize souls into spiritual life and progress? In the majority of cases the appeal for open confession of discipleship to Christ will come to those in our church schools who have already surrendered to our Lord, and have yielded because of the gradual and steady appeal of the Master himself and his truth, if educational evangelism has been pursued in the church school. "Decision Day" will not be choosing time, but the opportunity for revealing choices previously made. It will be the uncovering, not the formation, of "the will to believe." And such harvests of confessions may be expected perennially rather than annually.

### III. THE FORMS OF THIS MINISTRY

#### 1. *Pulpit and Personal Service*

What forms will this ministry take? The methods which the teaching pastor can follow have already been generally described.

His pulpit and personal ministry will inevitably have a powerful effect. The impact of truth upon

growing life can be provided for by conversations with the young, through sermons, and through the minister's attitude toward the Scriptures. A minister should never be so busy with the mechanics and chores of his pastoral life that he cannot take time to minister to individual souls. One has only to recall the conversations of our Lord with Nicodemus, the woman at the well, Zaccheus, and others to be impressed with a sense of the privilege of teaching individual persons. The best results are accomplished in this way. Dr. Francis Wayland once said that preaching to an audience was like swishing a saturated sponge into the air, and that the most that could be hoped for was that some drops of water would fall into the mouths of the empty bottles in front of the speaker. In conversation one takes the bottle by the neck and pours the water into it. There can be no greater joy in the minister's life nor any more efficient service to a soul than personal teaching concerning the holy book and the things of life.

## *2. Control of Church-school Curriculum*

The minister should have full charge of directing the curriculum of his church school. If the school is designed to be nothing more than a mere aggregation of human bodies, and its success mostly measured by arithmetical standards, and statistics are to be the criteria by which it is judged, then of course whatever will attract human beings to come will be used to promote such ideals. Or if the ideals of the school are to be simply mechanical, and the pupils are to be drilled in catechisms and in repetitions of passages of Scriptures and other feats of

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memoriter gymnastics, then a prepared set of victrola discs as well as human beings will answer for teachers. But if the institution is to be really a school with educational ideals and correct pedagogical methods, then it is of the utmost importance that the intelligent teaching pastor shall have general direction of all instruction which is given. There can be nothing but praise for the devotion of officers and teachers who seek to bring together as many persons as possible in attendance upon the church school. There is still higher praise due to those who use the church school as an opportunity for evangelistic work, who aim to bring its members into church fellowship. Nevertheless, the highest of all questions is not what is the roll strength, nor what is the average attendance, nor even how many scholars have joined the church, but how far is the whole church engaged in the study of the Scriptures and of divine truth, and what is the quality of the work done in the school. The church school should be something more than a mere recruiting agency for the church roll. It should be thoroughly, deeply educational. For this reason the teaching pastor should have the general direction of its policies. Every one knows that there is sore need here. Let the wide-awake laymen lead in administrative affairs, but when it comes to the curriculum of instruction, if the pastor be competent, he should dominate. He can rally around him a board of education composed of those who are intelligent in methods and ideals. Such an arrangement will provide for the best care of the young, and if right methods are adopted, the best results will inevitably follow.

### 3. *Supervision of Young People's Organizations*

The young people's organization also affords an opportunity not to be despised. So often the topics of these meetings are assigned by the central directorates with which the organizations are connected, and they relate to every conceivable realm of life. This is as it should be. Nevertheless, all topics should be considered in the light of spiritual principles and ideals revealed in the Scriptures. The pastor can see to it that no mistaken interpretations of the Bible are brought to bear upon the practical concerns of life. Headquarters of denominational organizations of young people should not be allowed to interfere with a proper development of any local group. As the minister is responsible for the religious lives of all the members of his flock he should have the general direction of all Biblical study pursued by organizations connected with the church. Here is another opportunity in dealing with his young people. "I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth," so said an old saint.<sup>13</sup> The crown of rejoicing in every pastor's life is the vision of spiritual life in those whom he has helped.<sup>14</sup> Like our Lord, we live that men may have life, and have it abundantly.<sup>15</sup> Like the great Teacher, all theological teachers, all school and college teachers, all teaching pastors find their delight and the justification of their lives in the characters and usefulness of those whom they have taught.

<sup>13</sup> 3 John 4.

<sup>14</sup> Phil. 4 : 1 ; 1 Thess. 2 : 19.

<sup>15</sup> John 10 : 10.

## LECTURE V

### HIS RELATION TO THE PROBLEM OF CHRISTIAN UNITY

#### *The Fact of Sectarianism*

The ministry of the teaching pastor has a vital relation to the problem of Christian unity. Every devout Christian must grieve over the divided state of the Christian church. The body of Christ has been dismembered. There are those who apologize for and defend this schism as beneficial to the total work, and promoting the increase of church-members. They quote Paul's words<sup>1</sup> as justification for their opinion: "Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will . . . What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and therein I rejoice, yea, and will rejoice." They forget that the whole passage was a plea for unity of sentiment. Men try to frighten believers in Christian unity by the picture of the difficulties they imagine would exist in the organization and work of one vast aggregation comprising all Christians. A united church could not be so wasteful and inefficient.

#### I. THE HARMFULNESS OF SECTARIANISM

##### 1. *Inability to Make United Sentiment Effective*

Think of the inability to express united Christian sentiment. Disciples of our Lord are also citizens

<sup>1</sup> Phil. 1 : 15-18.

of the countries in which they reside. They should wish to make effective in political life the ideals they profess. Their first obligation is to Jesus Christ and the promotion of his kingdom. Whatsoever they do, whether they eat or drink, work or vote, should be done to the glory of God and in the name of Jesus Christ.<sup>2</sup> The Christian element in a community or a country is now so divided that it has no way of expressing itself. In our own country over forty-five millions of members of Christian churches are separated into Roman Catholic and Protestant groups. In Romanism there are modernists and ultra-montaines and various other divisions, unified externally through the strong ecclesiastical bonds of hierarchy. In the Protestant world there are about two hundred sects and insects. Many of these are mere fissures that have occurred upon the slightest provocation and without reasonable justification. In a certain city there was a group calling itself "The Church of God." A faction left and organized with the name "The *True* Church of God." Even that faction did not find itself harmonious. Another cleavage withdrew and organized itself under the name of "The *Only* True Church of God." Any one can mortify his feelings by looking at the United States Religious Census. These forty-five millions of Christians who profess to love God supremely and obey Jesus alone and to love one another according to the commandment of their Lord<sup>3</sup> have no way of uniting their sentiment. This vast number of church-members represents a constituency of at least eighty millions in the United States, but they have no way of making their united

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. 10 : 31 ; Col. 3 : 17.

<sup>3</sup> John 15 : 12-17.

sentiments felt in public life. The low state of Christian life prevailing in millions of these hearts, and the facts of disorganization and disagreement hush their united voice against the selfish, unchristian policy of isolation in international affairs. The selection of Senators and members of the House of Representatives is left to selfish politics. There is no union of effort to declare to the world that the Christian church is against war and in favor of brotherhood, and that the majority of the eighty millions wish to outlaw legalized murder as a method of settling differences of opinion. There is no way by which this Christian sentiment can join itself to the same Jewish sentiment and the identical opinion of organized labor and thus unitedly make Christ's ideal of brotherhood felt. If there were no other reason for lamenting schism in the body of Christ, this alone would be ample to bring shame to the heart of every true Christian.

## *2. Disunion in Christian Work*

There is also difficulty in working together for the spiritual, educational, and philanthropic enterprises which Christianity always produces. Is it not true that many young ministers go out from seminaries to propagate denominationalism, that a pastor achieves a reputation far more as a builder of a local denominational group than because he spreads the power of vital Christianity and its ministries to the ignorant, the suffering, and the lonely? Efficiency in propagating sectarianism is too often the standard by which the success of a Christian minister is judged. The whole tendency of this separatism is toward fruitless selfishness.

### 3. *Waste of Money*

All this brings in its train a waste of money and becomes an economic scandal among those outside the churches. Business men who consider the relation of expense to achievement are repelled by the over-churching of some communities and by the neglect of others. If Christians, more devoted to the ideals of Jesus than to the multiplication of denominational statistics, protest against this waste, they are accused of disloyalty to principles, if not to Jesus Christ. In the country at a crossroad are three churches of different denominations all closed because none of the three could be supported by its partisans in the community. The treasuries of the respective denominations with which this trinity of idle temples is connected, feel that they are wiser in wasting their money in building more idle temples than in using those already erected. This is a wicked squandering of funds given in the name of religion. Many city centers are likewise over-churching. No one can look upon the situation at which we have barely hinted without the deep conviction that the blessing of God could not honestly be asked upon such sectarian folly.

### 4. *Waste of Ministerial Service*

There is also a waste of men. On the one hand there are thousands of ministers without churches. On the other hand, thousands of churches without pastors. Ministerial unemployment and ecclesiastical destitution are only obverse and reverse sides of this situation. City churches within a few hundred yards of one another are struggling to meet

current expenses for the support of public worship and of Christian activity. They are throwing upon a single man the burden of the pulpit, of pastoral visitation, administration, teaching, and all other offices necessary in connection with the support of the institution. There are cases where one man discharges every duty from that of the pulpit to the work of the janitor. Such a disgraceful situation from the economic view-point is from the religious view-point more than a scandal in the eyes of the world. In the case referred to in a previous lecture of a town of four thousand people with five churches struggling for existence, one church with a proper plant, a preacher of ability, a teaching pastor, and another worker would do more work for the regeneration of men and women and the Christianizing of the community than the five churches combined have been able to do. Sectarianism has robbed communities of the possession of the multiform ministry mentioned in the records of the early church.

##### *5. Impression on Non-Christians*

Perhaps saddest of all is the impression made upon the outside world by the unseemly spectacle of denominational rivalries. Those who are not church-members are perplexed over the clashes of dogmas, battles of creeds, contentions concerning rites and ceremonies, the arrogance of different ecclesiasticisms, and the undignified and unbecoming methods resorted to in the name of the glorious Christ to secure adherents to the various groups. Some pulpits are shut against ministers of other groups. Pipe-line theories of charismatic grace through digital contacts, assumptions of orthodoxy

that banish to the deserts of heterodoxy all who do not subscribe to dotting of i's and crossing of t's, have exiled worthy and powerful preachers from a few square yards of pulpit platform in the possession of those who cherish such assumptions. Is it any wonder that when Christ affirmed that all the law and the commandments and the very essence of the life that he came to give to the world, were summed up in the loving God with all the powers of personality and loving our neighbors as ourselves,<sup>4</sup> his teaching stands discredited in the eyes of the world by these consequences of disintegration?

#### 6. *Confusion in Foreign Mission Work*

And what of the impact of Christianity against the darkness of paganism? The "heathen" know nothing of and care less for the historical and personal reasons which have produced sectarianism in the church. They are met by the jangling, discordant voices of the apostles who propagate schism. Underneath all this is the absurd assumption that each sect has the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. The perplexity of an African or a Chinaman over this entire situation can hardly even be imagined by those of us who have been born into this tangled theological and ecclesiastical jungle.

## II. CONDITIONS DEMANDING TEACHING PASTORS

### 1. *Each Sect Appeals to the Bible*

What has the teaching pastor to do with all this? Much every way, for every schism claims Biblical reason for its existence. Each claims that loyalty

<sup>4</sup> Mark 12 : 28-34 ; Matt. 22 : 34-39 ; Luke 10 : 25-28.

to the Scriptures compels isolation, and authorizes the building of middle walls of partitions and the theological and ecclesiastical manufacture of barbed-wire fences to keep its adherents in and to keep out all others who do not agree with its peculiar Biblical interpretations. This is not the least melancholy aspect of the entire situation. We print more Bibles than any other book, sing about it in our hymns, declaim about it in our pulpits, translate it into more languages than any other literature, and fight over it more than over any other volume. We do everything with the Bible and for it except to live its holy truths as really intelligent study reveals them to us.

## *2. Love and Scholarship the Solution of the Problem*

There are two solutions for the problem and only two. One is moral, and the other is intellectual. The spiritual solution is the enthronement of love in the hearts of all believers. The other solution is to be made by Christian scholarship. This contribution is always slow in filtering itself through the prejudices of men. The traditional creedal and ceremonial vessels have been glazed by centuries of handling by hierarchies, and established usages of denominations. Christian scholarship is also slow in reaching the minds of those who surrender themselves to fantastic conceptions, who are willing disciples of grotesque notions, and who so exalt eccentricities that idiosyncrasies seem to be the most desirable things in religion. Any hope of healing the schisms in the body of Christ lies with these two agencies of Christian love and Christian scholarship. With them in control all financial waste would take

care of itself and the church would use its man power intelligently. The ministry would assume a more dignified place in the minds of the thinking elements of a community, and church work would appeal to business men who enthrone common sense in their methods.

### *3. The Pastors Are Leaders of Their Groups*

The pastors are the leaders, the keys to the situation. They not only preach the vitalities of religious experience but also propagate the various dogmas and usages that divide the church. Appeals from propagating denominational organizations come through the pastor. Ostensibly the prime consideration of these appeals is loyalty to Christ and the bringing of men into discipleship to him and the Christianizing of social relations. But a loud undertone is the thought of denominational increase. We worship the great god Statistics, whose standards are mathematical. We judge the growth of Christianity by the number of nominal adherents secured, and the number of church buildings erected. We do not emphasize the development of personal character, nor the degree to which we have Christianized business, recreations, social life, and politics. The call to the pastor is that of fidelity to the denominational group and its enterprises. To make this importunity more powerful it is often clothed in garments of orthodoxy that would force a man either to wear a conventional dogmatic costume, or go naked, or else identify himself with some other ecclesiastical haberdashery. Precisely because the pastor is the acknowledged key to the situation, his opportunity is unique. Both in his local church and

as a member of the general bodies with which his church is connected, he can make his voice felt and can bring to bear upon conditions the contribution of Christian love for all men and sound scholarship concerning the Scriptures. So long as churches are led by ministers who think they have been sent out to propagate ready-made sectarian ideals rather than to lead people into the glorious privilege of sharing the very life of Christ, we shall have the existing conditions. So long as the members of churches are not led into the genuine knowledge of the Scriptures and educational processes are held in abeyance, just so long will the uninformed be content with the ministry that confirms existing notions, intensifies ecclesiastical narrowness, and stimulates enthusiasm for partisanship. The beginnings of sectarianism cropped out in Corinth.<sup>5</sup> No one can fail to feel the wideness of our Christian possessions when he reads the glorious statement that all things are ours: <sup>6</sup> "Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come: all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." Certainly Paul's attitude as the founder and pastor of the church at Corinth did not favor division of that group.

#### 4. *Varieties of Biblical Interpretation*

The teaching pastor has a vital relation to this situation because of varieties of Biblical interpretation. If there be anything beyond question, it is that this one common basis was not produced with a multitude of meanings. A sane man in writing has

<sup>5</sup> 1 Cor. 1 : 11-17 ; 2 : 3-9.

<sup>6</sup> 1 Cor. 3 : 22, 23.

one single, definite, clear-cut meaning in his words. When he is writing about religion the vital issues involved would prevent him from deliberately writing ambiguously. Double meanings to Scripture are unthinkable. It may be granted that no Biblical writer could realize the full, far-reaching import of any utterance, since none can ever foresee all the applications of a principle which he enunciates. That, however, is not to say that a Biblical writer did not understand his own words or purposely meant them to be construed in a double sense. Moreover, if to these two ethical canons of writing and speaking we should add convictions of guidance by the Holy Spirit, the case is all the stronger. Did God trifle with human intelligence? Did he ever mean when he spoke through prophet or apostle that his message should be capable of more than one interpretation? Did the divine plan purpose that heaven's illumination of human ignorance should be doubtful, that light should be confused, that the lamp to our feet should tantalize us by indefiniteness and uncertainty? On any theory of inspiration, whether dynamic or verbal, none can assume that God meant two things, talked two ways, and intended to justify opposite theories about himself or about our relations to him or to one another. To make such an assumption is to dethrone the Scriptures as authority, to accuse the Almighty of duplicity, of intellectual insincerity, and of trifling with the highest interests of his creatures. The teaching pastor will insist upon these things and will do his best to discover precisely the significance of any Scripture, and also to test it by the revelation of God in Jesus Christ which likewise will be sought in the most

honest spirit and method possible. Into such an attitude he will conduct his followers. The very word "rule" in the expression "the Bible is our rule of faith and practise" is misleading. The Scriptures are not a collection of rules. That mistake the unthinking have made. It is a literature which records life, and in the life thus recorded there are revealed principles, axiomatic, self-evident spiritual ideals according to which God would have men live. In the use of the Bible for guidance in Christian living and thinking there are three elements to be considered: First, the conditions of life at the time when the Scriptures were produced; second, the principles involved in those conditions discovered by honest, intelligent study; and third, the specific rule which comes from the application of the principle to the conditions. Rules are the children of the marriage of principles to conditions. Principles are eternal, self-evident and axiomatic. Rules vary as conditions change. For instance, this is the Lenten season. Jesus told people when they fasted to anoint their hair with oil.<sup>7</sup> That was his rule. It is violated today throughout Christendom by all who observe Lent. Hair-oil is not specially used among certain Christians during Lent nor on Fridays. Customs have changed. The principle was that ye "appear not unto men to fast." If we observed the rule now we would violate the principle. A principle can be applied to many other situations than that out of which its statement came. Jesus' ideal that personal religious exercises were not matters of advertisement is applicable to many things other than fasting.<sup>8</sup> The same intelligence in the

<sup>7</sup> Matt. 6 : 16-18.

<sup>8</sup> Matt. 6 : 1-7.

use of the Bible will not send us to it for "rules." We shall seek for the eternal principles of righteous living, as good in one generation as in another. We shall emancipate ourselves from the mechanical attitude that turns the Scriptures into a manual of religious etiquette. It is precisely because of unintelligent teaching in the pulpit that some denominations exist and put a "Thus saith the Lord" behind their mistaken conceptions of the teachings of the Bible.

### 5. *Influence of Dogmatic Prepossessions*

Another cause for divisions among Christians is dogmatic prepossession. This is especially true of denominations that have historic creeds, to which perpetual adherence is demanded. The Russian Church which arrogates to itself the title "Orthodox," boasts that through the centuries of the Christian era it has never changed an iota of its creed. More or less of this pride of consistency and tenacity is in the minds of those who rest upon historic statements of faith. "Orthodoxy" in the sense of right thinking is to be commended, but there must be no tolerance for the assumption that the only straight thinking in the history of the Christian church has been done by those who lived centuries or millenniums ago. The youngest of our great creeds, the Westminster Confession, was published in 1646, about a generation after King James' Version of the Bible was issued in 1611. More interesting yet is the fact that Sir Isaac Newton was born in 1642. The discoverer of the law of gravitation and the author of the *Principia* was a boy four years old when the Westminster Confession was adopted.

Modern science had not begun when the youngest of the great confessions of Christendom appeared. The history of symbolics is forced to face this fact. The birth of Newton and the publication of the Westminster Confession were practically synchronous. Since then the whole field of human thought has changed, a new heaven and a new earth have appeared, the scientific age has come with its new knowledge of the physical universe, a new conception of the history of man, a new anthropology. Archeology as now understood was not in existence at the time this confession of faith was made. One has only to compare the knowledge of the middle of the seventeenth century with that of the twentieth to see how methods and view-points have all been changed. Since God reveals himself through creation and human life, we are forced to say, not that God has changed, but that our conceptions of him have become larger and vaster. In the face of all this shall the pastor ignore the light that has come upon the Scriptures? Moreover, archeology and lexicography have made marvelous advances since that confession was formed. Today we make dictionaries and grammars of New Testament Greek in the light of thousands of papyri, ostrica, and monuments which reveal to us the *koine*, or the ordinary colloquial language of the first century, which is the language in which our New Testament was written. The space of this lecture does not permit even one illustration of the effect of this new knowledge upon New Testament lexicography or grammar or interpretation. Archeology is throwing vast light upon both New Testament and Old Testament history out of which the literature grew,

and the end is not yet. When Casper Rene Gregory was last in this country, he told the writer that he was then gathering a staff of workers for a new lexicon of New Testament Greek. Alas, that he lost his life in the World War! In the face of these and many other facts which cannot be recited here, how preposterous it is for men to buttress denominational existence by a creed which was published in an unscientific age before the world had received the means for such a study of the Scriptures as we now possess. If the question be put to a sincere pastor, who desires to teach his people the truth and only the truth, whether he shall cling to a traditional creed and propagate its conceptions, or whether he shall do the questionably ethical thing of using that creed with a loose interpretation, of which the framers of the creed never dreamed, or whether he shall cut loose from the creed and give the people the truth as God has revealed it to him in the providential revelations that have come through the increase of human knowledge, there can be but one answer for an honest man. But in asking this question we have struck at the root of denominationalism so far as it rests upon dogmatic prepossessions. Why should the men of today, richly blessed indeed by what the men of yesterday perceived, and enriched by the legacies of their Christian lives, be content to think that the same God who revealed light to their ecclesiastical and theological ancestors has stopped the shedding of light? Today with our advantages the obligation should be greater than upon any previous generation. Of this increased opulence the teaching pastor should make as abundant use as his opportunities will allow. After all,

what is the preservation of a creed, or as Baptists call it, a "confession of faith," compared with the understanding of the truth of God? Every generation should try to learn the will of God more perfectly. We have the best Biblical example for this.<sup>9</sup> From vows of loyalty to past confessions of faith made by fallible men like ourselves but not endowed with light as great as we possess, God has absolved every man by the very increased illumination he has sent. The function of a teaching pastor is not to indoctrinate his people with bygone statements of faith which a growing world has left behind, but to lead men into the vital truth. Here is a vast contribution which Christian scholarship incarnated in the teaching pastor can make to the vital problem of Christian union.

#### 6. *Bondage to Historical and Hereditary Accidents*

Where denominational divisions shelter themselves under great names, or temperamental peculiarities, or temporary historical considerations, the teaching pastor will lead people to see that the possession of spiritual reality is above all other considerations. We may well thank God for the great men who had the courage to stand against what they conceived to be invasions of religious rights and also impositions upon their freedom. We may give due credit to historical conditions that at the time made protest necessary. A retrospect of church history will reveal the large part that Christian men have had in religious movements. Far be it from us to minimize their heroic functions. Yet in the light of the newer day and the develop-

<sup>9</sup> Acts 18 : 26 ; 19 : 1-5.

ments of the years it ought to be easy to review their contentions. The discouraging thing that meets the teaching pastor is the frequency with which these men are quoted as if their utterances justified the perpetuation of divisions, the historical reasons for which have long since ceased. Even their conceptions of the Bible are not necessarily infallible. They are subject to review, and in the spirit of consideration and appreciation should be fearlessly examined by men today. If their contentions will not stand the test of modern Biblical study, then they should be surrendered as authoritative, no matter how interesting they might be historically. If on the other hand the things for which they stood prove to be of eternal value, there is no reason why these things should not be joined with others of like value stated by other persons. No reality can ever be inconsistent with any other reality. Truth is one. The nearer we approach to reality, the nearer we come to one another. Where denominational divisions are temperamental, the problem is somewhat keener. Many whose esthetic sense is highly cultured wish to worship God in ways that commend themselves to refined souls. They should not be denied that privilege. Worship is a function of the esthetic faculty, the perception of the worthship of God. "One thing have I asked of Jehovah, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of Jehovah all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of Jehovah, and to inquire in his temple."<sup>10</sup> Whoever gave expression to that desire wanted to bring both his esthetic sense and his interrogation-mark into the place of worship. There is no reason

<sup>10</sup> Ps. 27 : 4.

why they should not be brought there together. How many times the ugly barrenness of a church service has offended the sense of the beautiful. How many times the dogmatism of a church or its preacher has prevented the entrance of the interrogation-mark into the house of the Lord. There is no reason why denominational divisions should be based upon these lines, why one group should emphasize whatever is beautiful in worship, and another should emphasize the spirit of free inquiry, and neither should have communion with the other. Often sectarian feeling is hereditary. Denominational labels have been handed down as heirlooms. In many cases those who wear these labels are like certain hybrid animals without pride of ancestry or hope of posterity. Hereditary ecclesiasticism is seldom based upon conviction. What is the teaching pastor to do in all these cases? Surely he will be able to show from the Scriptures that the perception of the worthship of God is the essence of worship, that the Christ turned away no questioner from his illumination but welcomed all inquiries, and that so far as purely hereditary ecclesiasticism is concerned, God is able out of stones to raise up children unto Abraham.<sup>11</sup> The teacher using the historical method will at least show his people the essential truth that God is worshipped both in Jerusalem and in Gerizim, and that neither shrine can monopolize adoration, that what God seeks is communion of our spirits with his based upon reality.<sup>12</sup> If the teaching pastor will exalt Jesus' idea of the kingdom of God, and get his people to see that

<sup>11</sup> Matt. 3 : 9.

<sup>12</sup> John 4 : 20-24.

churches exist to realize this matchless dream of our Lord of a state of human society characterized by freedom in thinking and in conduct (unregulated by the devices of legalism), by righteousness in character and in relations with others, and by love expressing itself in service even to the degree of sacrifice, he will do much to take away the pride that many feel in belonging to groups that exalt minor considerations. The kingdom of God as dreamed of by Jesus was human society without regard to race or geography in which every person lives like a child of the heavenly Father, and therefore all live together as God's human family. The church is supposed to consist of those who appreciate and practise this ideal of Jesus, who through Christian social instinct have banded themselves together to promote this ideal throughout the world. In the face of this conception, the trifles that divide Christian people appear insignificant. The pastor who understands his Bible, and who will show the evolution from the narrowness of Judaism through the wide views of the noblest Old Testament prophets<sup>13</sup> to the perfect teaching of our Lord<sup>14</sup> and the vision of the new humanity expressed by Paul,<sup>15</sup> will do more to destroy the blight of crass sectarianism than all the polemics in the world can accomplish.

### *7. Failure of All Other Plans for Union*

The failure of all other devices to promote Christian unity drives us back upon education. There

<sup>13</sup> Isa. 19 : 23-25 ; 42 : 1-4.

<sup>14</sup> Matt. 8 : 11 ; Luke 13 : 29.

<sup>15</sup> Col. 3 : 11.

have been conferences to see how people could get together. The world is still studying the recent appeal of Bishops of the Anglican Church. A Conference on Faith and Order is facing Christendom. In it there will come up for discussion confessional matters; comparisons of creeds, and possibly the effort to construct some new confession of faith, or obtain adherence to one that already exists. There will also be presented views of "ordination" and of ecclesiasticism. All differences of opinion that will be presented on these matters will be historical and will be based upon various methods of Biblical study. One of three things is possible: The yielding of some to others; or, amalgamation of all in some great inclusive movement; or, one more instance of compromise to be put alongside of many that church history records. How much better it would be if the sane scholarship of the world would set itself afresh to study all mooted questions in the spirit of love and of absolute intellectual honesty emancipated from preconceptions and historical considerations, and seek to discover just what are the principles that the Bible which is "the rule of faith and practise" intended men to believe and live. Even this would raise a question. No one can study the New Testament intelligently without discovering that the early church believed that Jesus himself would soon return to the earth and establish a Messianic era. Paul's letters reveal this hope in very intense forms. So consuming was it that the church did not make creeds, nor establish governments, nor erect edifices, nor concern itself with social reforms, such as abolition of slavery, intemperance, and industrial injustice. These matters are virtually ig-

nored except as general principles of Christian life are stated in the light of which men were to live. Paul advised against marriage because the time was short.<sup>16</sup> He told slaves not to seek their freedom, but to abide in the calling where they were.<sup>17</sup> He sent Onesimus back to Philemon. He declared that the Lord's Supper was intended to show forth the death of Jesus until he returned,<sup>18</sup> and in the same letter that contains that statement said that the Lord was at hand.<sup>19</sup> Have we not made permanent things which the early church considered transient and temporary, and then divided ourselves into segments by mistaken interpretations of a literature the very existence of which was due to the disappointment of the early church in its expectation of the speedy return of Jesus to the world? Had he returned when the early church expected him, would we have had a New Testament? Would the communion have existed to the present day? What would have been the course of church history had this expectation been satisfied? We are not discussing the origin of this hope, but simply the patent fact that it was disappointed, and that because of this disappointment many things have arisen that are now contributing to our divisions. The teaching pastor who studies his New Testament historically and seeks to account for the very literature he is studying and for specific utterances it contains, will so educate his people that they will be immune against many things that today perplex Christendom because we have been lacking in teach-

<sup>16</sup> 1 Cor. 7 : 7-9, 27, 29, 32-34, 38-40.

<sup>17</sup> 1 Cor. 7 : 20, 21.

<sup>18</sup> 1 Cor. 11 : 26.

<sup>19</sup> 1 Cor. 16 : 22, *Maranatha*.

ing pastors. We have tried all other methods to promote unity. Is it not time to try this method which should suggest itself to every lover of the Bible as the easiest way to a solution of differences among all those who claim to appeal to the Scriptures as the authority for their separation from their fellow Christians?

### III. THE SPECIFIC CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE TEACHING PASTOR

#### 1. *Leadership in Sane Bible Study*

He can lead into sane Bible study, and strenuously insist that for any passage of Scripture there can be but one meaning, that which was in the mind of the writer or speaker, and make honest effort to find out precisely what that meaning was. How gross the departure from this simple, ethical, axiomatic canon of interpretation can be will be seen by a glance at "*Science and Health; A Key to the Scriptures.*" Think of this!

The name Adam is from the Hebrew *adamah*, signifying the red color of the ground, dust, nothingness. The word Adam should be regarded as identical with the Latin *daemon*.<sup>20</sup> Originally demons were not always considered as evil beings, but as partly good, though now the word is used exclusively of harmful and mischievous spirits—somewhat in this way ought Adam to be thought of: as a *dam*, an obstructionist, as error opposed to Truth.<sup>21</sup>

All adjectives are defied by the grotesqueness of this glossary.

<sup>20</sup> O ye shades of philology!

<sup>21</sup> "*Science and Health*," Twenty-first Edition, 1886, p. 381, par. xvii.

Eve. A beginning; mortality; that which does not last forever; a finite belief concerning life, substance, and intelligence in matter; error; the belief that the human race originated materially instead of spiritually, that man started firstly from dust, secondly from a rib, and thirdly from an egg, self-imposed folly and its consequences.<sup>22</sup>

That may be a dazzling appeal to those who are ignorant of the real nature of Scripture. If such nonsense could be accepted, it will only confirm in deeper ignorance than they had before those who show it hospitality. This is only an extreme illustration, but there have been many interpretations of the Bible outside of "Christian Science" that will approach these in absurdity. Anything else than honest, painstaking effort to discover the meaning of Scripture will inevitably plunge those who profess to love the Bible into all kinds of variations of opinion, many of them unspeakably absurd. Swedenborg's "correspondential interpretation" could furnish instances. The open mind, the spirit willing to surrender all misconceptions and to admit all light, is the primary consideration. When a scholarly, ethical, and spiritual attitude exists in the pastors and can be implanted in the mind of followers, then researches as to faith, ecclesiasticism, dogma, and the meaning of words will bring forth essential unity and harmony.

## *2. Moral Courage in Facing Truth*

Teaching pastors can show and inculcate moral courage in facing the truth without regard to con-

<sup>22</sup> From Glossary to "Science and Health. A Key to the Scriptures," Twenty-first Edition Revised, 1886. In the Edition published in 1916, in English and German, Eve was mercifully spared the burden of "self-imposed folly and its consequences" by the omission of that clause.

sequence. Whatever may have been believed will be cheerfully surrendered if the discovery of reality compels it. Paul counted as refuse the things that formerly were gain to him that he might win Christ and be found in him.<sup>23</sup> How splendid a vision it is to see that the Bible is the literary record of spiritual experiences in the great laboratory of life, that in this literature men tell what they saw of God, that they hand over to us the apparatus they used in their observations, and say: "Here are the instruments we used and the discoveries we made. Take our apparatus, verify our discoveries, try to add to our knowledge, complete our partial visions, correct our mistaken conceptions, and if perchance you can add to the apparatus we used, do not hesitate to do so, for the knowledge God is eternal life,<sup>24</sup> and we desire not to prevent your own effort to know God nor to halt your energies by our discoveries, but to stimulate you to know for yourself and to enlarge if possible what we have found."

### 3. *Emphasis Upon Life Above Literature*

After all, the teaching pastor will place his emphasis upon life and not upon literature. He will use the literature as the vehicle for the discovery of life. Jesus declared that life can come only from life. He told<sup>25</sup> the theologians of his day: "You are searching the Scriptures, for in them you think you find eternal life, but you are mistaken. Life is not in literature, but only from life. The Scriptures testify concerning me, and ye will not come to

<sup>23</sup> Phil. 3 : 8.

<sup>24</sup> John 17 : 3.

<sup>25</sup> John 5 : 39, 40.

me that ye might receive life." It was his announcement that what we of this day call the law of biogenesis obtains in religion as well as in biology. By no processes of grammar, philology, lexicography, archeology, or exegesis can men produce the life of God in the souls of men. All these are important essentials for understanding the testimony of those who lead to the Master. Christianity will become for the teaching pastor the possession and impartation of the life of God revealed in Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, all studies for which we have been pleading will have as their objective the clear, clean-cut revelation of what kind of a life it is that God truly gives to men. We are not quickened by inspired punctuation-marks, but by the life of God that throbbed in men's lives and determined their relations to others. No lexicon can ever regenerate. Life alone can accomplish that miracle in character. This was the method of the Great Teacher. He did not hesitate to say,<sup>26</sup> "You have heard that it has been said . . . but I say unto you." He could talk that way because in him was life.<sup>27</sup> It was not in the literature, not even in that which he did not set aside, much less in that which he did abrogate. Everywhere he used the life which the Old Testament recorded as the vehicle through which the life of his Father came to the men of old. But most of all it was his own life that he used, his teaching, his living. Men do not raise wheat for the sake of straw or chaff, but without straw or chaff there could be no precious kernel for the food of men. When once we have seen the

<sup>26</sup> Matt. 5 : 21, 22, 27, 28, 31, 32, 33, 34.

<sup>27</sup> John 1 : 4.

life that is life indeed and opened our hearts to its inflow, we shall have made the highest possible use of the Bible. There is an evangelistic power in teaching at least equal to that of mere pleading, or exhorting, or the telling of pathetic stories, or moving merely upon the emotions. A deep conviction is worth a thousand tears, unless the tears come because of the conviction.

#### *4. If All Ministers Were Teaching Pastors*

Lastly, what would be the result so far as healing the divisions of the church is concerned if all ministers of all denominations were for a single generation to practise this teaching function? What intelligence would come to the Christian body? How many grotesque, queer, and inexcusable segments of the Christian church would fall away? If just one generation could be free from allegorized, spiritualized, fanciful treatment of Scripture language and dedicate itself under the guidance of a competent ministry to the sane effort to find exactly what the Scriptures do teach, how wonderful the next generation would be in knowledge! With the Holy Spirit resident in the hearts of men, and the spirit of truth and of reality sanctifying the souls of men, what would come from such a treatment of the Bible? Why should men resist the Holy Spirit when he is trying to teach us through the general progress of human knowledge, through the triumphs of scientific methods, and through our own consciences that the only way to use the Bible is as God in his providence intended us to use it? If the church could have educated leadership for a single generation, its fragments would come together and

all our unhappy divisions would disappear. The key to the solution of the problem lies in thoroughly educated pastors who are willing to perform the teaching function, and to bring up young and old in the knowledge of the truth. Let the Scriptures be "the rule of our faith and practise," but let them be fairly interpreted. Some years ago the late President Harper of the University of Chicago had an experience which well illustrates this. He lectured in the city of New York before the Baptist ministers of that city and vicinity. The impression he made by his lecture upon one of the minor prophets was profound. An editor of a certain Baptist newspaper, not published in New York, arose and announced that he had engaged Doctor Harper to write twelve articles for his paper upon the study of the Bible, and offered the ministers a year's subscription to his paper at greatly reduced rates so that they could have the advantage of reading the coming articles. Large numbers subscribed. The articles were never published. President Harper himself told the writer the reason. The editor of that paper desired in the announcement of the contemplated articles to make a statement concerning Doctor Harper's views of the Bible. He handed the distinguished scholar a paper upon which was written, "I believe the Scriptures to be the rule of Christian faith and practise," and asked Doctor Harper to sign that statement that he might print it in the announcement. The great man took the paper, put a caret after the word "Scriptures" and inserted two words "fairly interpreted." The editor declined to allow the insertion of those two words and canceled the contract with the scholar, though he did

not return the money to the subscribers. "Fairly interpreted." On those two words with mutual Christian love really hangs the solution of the problem we have been discussing. What other words could an honest man use?

## LECTURE VI

### SOME SPIRITUAL VALUES OF HIS MINISTRY

#### *Every Form of Ministry Has Its Own Spiritual Value*

Each of the manifold forms of the Christian ministry yields its own specific spiritual values. Whether we give ourselves to missions, philanthropy, evangelism, consolation, the individual person, or scholarship, there always comes back to our own souls the benediction of the special kind of work we do. What are some of the values that the teaching pastor will inevitably discover? These will relate to himself, to the literature he teaches, to those whom he seeks to instruct, and to God.

#### I. PERSONAL VALUES

The teaching pastor will reap spiritual blessings that will become inalienable in his personal life.

##### *1. Mental, Social, Ethical, and Devotional Values*

In the second lecture we alluded to some of these: Compulsory, systematic Bible study; fellowship with others in the pursuit of spiritual reality; wide culture of mind inevitable to the conscientious student and teacher; ethical enthusiasm in all activities of his being; and genuine devotional appreciation of the Scriptures. Only experience could realize the richness of these blessings. To these we must now add a few others.

## 2. *Repose of Entire Rational Nature*

The repose of his rational nature in sane study of the Bible and in teaching its results will follow. Personality is a unit. We cannot separate mental processes from our feelings. What God has joined together in the oneness of personality no man can put asunder. It is an unspeakable comfort to take the whole of ourselves into any task or service. Peace of mind demands that there shall be no inward discord, that all powers of our being work in harmony. That is essential for growth of personality and for its highest service. Unfortunately today some men are called "pietists" and others "rationalists." One class is supposed to emphasize emotions, conventional religious aspirations, and vocabularies. The other is accused of overemphasis upon intellectual processes. Thinking men should not resign themselves to either of these classes. No man will defend the statement that God gave human beings brains that they might be idle in religion, or that they might be insulted in the name of the God who gave them. The soul finds its ease when without dismemberment or subtraction it gives its entire self.<sup>1</sup> Such complete dedication the teaching pastor gives, and reaps rest of spirit. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy mind"<sup>2</sup> is part of the First Commandment. The consequent emotions are developed, the will forms its purpose accordingly, and there come joy and enthusiasm. Years ago an editor of a daily paper who was also trying to teach a Bible class on Sundays told the

<sup>1</sup> Rom. 7 : 15-24.

<sup>2</sup> Mark 12 : 30.

writer a sad personal history. After preparation at college and theological seminary he declined his first call to a pastorate because he could not put his entire self into the work. His rational nature would not permit him to preach some things required. He became a traveling salesman. One night after years of selling things his strong religious nature reasserted itself. He yielded to the suggestion of compromise, and tried to walk two paths. On Sundays he would teach such traditional views as he could without too violent offense to his intellectual nature, withholding opinions that went beyond the bounds set by his church relations. Soon the unity of truth demanded his loyalty. He had to face the question of the ethical honesty of giving a fraction of himself to a fraction of truth. That is the worst form of spiritual segmentalism. After a lengthy correspondence with the writer he surrendered to the first commandment of our Lord<sup>3</sup> and then found not only peace in his soul, but vastly increased efficiency in his Sunday work, and finally gave up journalism, entered the ministry, and constantly rejoices in his work as a teaching pastor. When we love Christ, the Bible, and men with all our hearts and minds and soul and strength, there comes a calmness and harmony of spirit that is an unspeakable asset to a minister's work. There are only two ways of peaceful rest, that of Jonah with a dead conscience,<sup>4</sup> and that of Jesus in perfect oneness with God.<sup>5</sup> Both slept in storms, but how utterly different were the conditions of soul that made rest possible. In religion compromise and contentment are foes. Only when the minister in his study and teaching as well

<sup>3</sup> Mark 12 : 30.

<sup>4</sup> Jonah 1 : 5.

<sup>5</sup> Mark 4 : 38.

as in his life fearlessly follows the light that God sends, can he expect to have the peace that passes understanding.

### 3. *Nourishment of Spirit While Feeding Others*

The teaching pastor will nourish his own spirit while he feeds the lives of others. Frederick W. Robertson describes some ministers who are like fountains in parks. The refreshing water flows to slake the thirst of others, but the pipes absorb none of it. Not so could be the teaching pastor. Possibly only through bitter experiences, such as some of us have had, in transition from loose methods of Bible study into the only sane method, can self-nourishment and teaching become synchronous. The modern locomotive does not stop at water tanks but gets the water from troughs between the rails. "They shall feed in the ways"<sup>6</sup> along the exalted highways is the conception of an Old Testament prophet. Wherever a minister will saturate himself with the Biblical life he is studying, he will find food for himself. His sermons will be autobiographical. His words will come with his life-blood upon them. There will be an accent of reality which the best-conceived or written essay cannot imitate. He will deal with life and not discuss topics. He will utter reality, not pious conventionality. The definition of a sermon by Phillips Brooks, "Truth through personality,"<sup>7</sup> will be an actual experience. Expression will be the necessity of possession. He will be speaking things he has seen and heard.<sup>8</sup> No

<sup>6</sup> Isa. 49 : 9-11.

<sup>7</sup> Yale "Lectures on Preaching," by Phillips Brooks, 1877.

<sup>8</sup> 1 John 1 : 1-3.

solitude of retreats, no galvanism by intense effort, no frenzy like that of Baal priests <sup>9</sup> can ever produce what will inevitably come if we live with those who have found spiritual reality.

#### 4. *The Spiritual Blessedness of Teaching*

He will know the peculiar blessedness of the teaching ministry. There is no higher joy than that of leading a person into intelligent discipleship to Jesus Christ. There is a peculiar blessedness in knowing that some ignorance has given way to light, that error has been corrected by illumination that does not lead astray, and that superstition has retired before clear knowledge of the will of God. Was not this the joy of the great Teacher, as he dealt with the Twelve? Ponder his deep stirring of soul in thanksgiving for his success as the mediator who had revealed the things of God to the openminded.<sup>10</sup> Think of his joy the night before his death. He had manifested the nature of the heavenly Father to the Twelve.<sup>11</sup> No wonder he spoke of his joy. Art has never painted the face of a happy Christ. Yet he taught his little school that his joy might remain in them and their joy might be full.<sup>12</sup> It was the joy of perfect self-realization, of perfect social adjustment, and of uninterrupted communion with the Father, a happiness over which circumstances had no control, and which is as good for any other world as for this. It is the peculiar joy of the teacher who tries to reveal God and spiritual reality to those to whom he ministers.

<sup>9</sup> 1 Kings 18 : 28, 29.

<sup>10</sup> Luke 10 : 21.

<sup>11</sup> John 17 : 6.

<sup>12</sup> John 15 : 11 ; 16 : 24 ; 17 : 13.

## II. APPRECIATION OF THE BIBLE

Think of his appreciation of the Biblical record of revelation. God uses every avenue to show himself to men. The material universe, the course of human history, the image of God in man—all are vehicles of revelation. Certain characteristics of revelation recorded in the Bible become valuably apparent to the teaching pastor.

### 1. *Revelation Through History*

Its historical character is precious. It has come through life, not through magic. An angel flying through the skies trumpeting truth, or unusual manifestations of the unseen God might seem to some more authentic and influential than the simple story of how men came to know God through life. Jesus discounted faith in such signs<sup>13</sup> and declared that those who sought them belonged to a generation neither good nor pure.<sup>14</sup> He also declared that revelation was discernible in current events, that all life was a sign, and that what men needed was not signs but eyes to understand the signs in the life of which they were a part.<sup>15</sup> That our Father chose the ordinary human life as the means of revealing himself is of the utmost value. The Bible is no Koran, no accumulation of detached, imaginary messages dictated by the Almighty without reference to the circumstances under which the revelation was given. The typewriter or phonograph theory of inspiration can hardly be accepted by intelligent students of the Scriptures. Human minds were not

<sup>13</sup> John 2 : 23, 24 ; cf. Matt. 4 : 5-7.

<sup>14</sup> Matt. 12 : 39.

<sup>15</sup> Luke 12 : 54-57.

holy victrola discs indented with the intonations of the Infinite. Revelations came through historic conditions, personal experiences, situations current at given times. God was interested in life and wished to teach men how to live. The Holy Spirit brooded over all processes of life. The spiritually-minded discerned the divine element in a given situation and had courage to declare what they beheld. The statement of our Lord that the pure in heart see God<sup>16</sup> is also applicable to Old Testament history. The prophet had spiritual aspirations and receptivity. With singleness of eye he desired to see the moral significance of a condition or event.<sup>17</sup> The veil was lifted and he could say, "Thus saith the Lord." Our Father was interested in men, their political situations, their moral aspirations, their backslidings. One reads the Old Testament prophets to little purpose if he does not see that many utterances grow out of their conviction of the profound concern of Jehovah in international politics. For these men the dreams of Babylon, Assyria, Egypt, and the Hittites for world power were not merely secular affairs. The little hyphen land of Palestine that seemed to these great powers to be only a pathway on which to get at one another, was a gorge through which the pent-up floods of aspiration for world dominion swept with terrific power, and yet a calm, placid lake surrounded by the protecting mountains of Jehovah's care. Some one has said that "history is His story." Precisely because the revelation recorded in the Scriptures is historical we are driven back to the history in order to understand the revelation. The unveiling comes through life, and lit-

<sup>16</sup> Matt. 5 : 8.

<sup>17</sup> Matt. 6 : 22, 23.

erature as the record of life. In that history men were certainly factors, seeking to work out their own plans. Sometimes these factors claimed that their purposes were inspired by the deities of the territories in which they lived. Nevertheless, the Factor unrecognized by the common people, undreamed of by the world's leaders, was clearly perceived by those whose hearts were open to the revelation that came through the history. It is of tremendous meaning that this method was chosen by the God of all the earth for the unveiling of himself. Does it not sanctify all so-called secular occurrences of human history? Did not God wish us to learn the great lesson that he does not work outside of ordinary normal processes, but uses them all as the vehicles of revelation?

## 2. *The Religious Value of Human Experiences*

We thus learn the religious value of human experiences. God spoke unto the fathers in many fragments, and multiform ways,<sup>18</sup> as varied as the lives that understood them and the experiences they had. The Old Testament is not above saying that the Holy Spirit helped a man to hammer out some of the brass ornaments of the tabernacle.<sup>19</sup> God brooded over life all the way from primitive metallurgy and architecture to the life of our Lord. One is bewildered if he tries to catalog the experiences of men through which God came to them.<sup>20</sup> Nor can we forget stories like those of Abraham, an idolater in his native land,<sup>21</sup> dissatisfied with the worship of his moon

<sup>18</sup> Heb. 1 : 1.

<sup>19</sup> Exod. 31 : 1-5.

<sup>20</sup> See "Voices of the Spirit," by George Matheson.

<sup>21</sup> Josh. 24 : 14, 15.

god and going out in fidelity to the God his own heart called for. Through what experiences Jehovah revealed himself to this "father of the faithful," this "friend of God."<sup>22</sup> Nor must we forget Jacob, that heel-catcher, supplanter, who started out to win life's victories through the clever exercise of his pawn-broking spirit, and how in the very midst of his emigration between two suns he was forced to his knees and taught that he could not enter Canaan through mere shrewdness, but as a prince of prayer<sup>23</sup> and as a suppliant. What these stories of the Old Testament, and the New as well, teach is that every event in life has its divine significance, that God does not disdain to use ordinary occurrences as well as extraordinary for the unveiling of himself. Because the revelation was historical it had to come through events which taken together make up history. In the experiences of nations as well as of persons God made his nature known to the world.

### *3. Divine Use of Current Vehicles*

God used current vehicles in revelation. Hebrew poetry in the Old Testament and that of the Babylonians differ not in form but in content. No new literary vehicle was made. Parallelism prevailed throughout Semitic nations. There was no creation of a celestial alphabet, nor of a heavenly grammar, nor of a supernatural vocabulary, none of which could have been understood. Divine ideas did not require extraordinary vehicles. Nor was there miraculous anticipation of types of civilization that developed centuries after an occurrence. God used

<sup>22</sup> James 2 : 23.

<sup>23</sup> Gen. 32 : 24-28.

what men had. He always does the best he can with the material at his disposal, whether it is literature or life. The kinship between the early narratives of Genesis and current Semitic literature ought not to surprise us.<sup>24</sup> The revelations of God were contemporary, and in terms that could be understood by those who received them. They used current conceptions of the physical universe. The Almighty did not reveal beforehand nor anticipate our knowledge of modern science. He could not have been understood had he done so. Surely it should comfort us that God is glad to use whatever we possess as the channel of his revelation. It has always been true of revelation that men had the heavenly treasure in earthen vessels.<sup>25</sup> Every vessel, literary, domestic, commercial, can be sanctified by the Spirit who would use it to convey truth.

#### 4. *The Permanent Values of the Bible*

We learn the permanent values of the Bible. How hard it is for some to distinguish between the transient and the permanent. The world is much like each human heart. Before each of us passes a procession of countless vehicles which dump their contents into our lives and then pass on. School-books from which we learn alphabets, arithmetic, geography, geometry, and literature; playmates, incidents of youthful life, have passed out into the eternity that has gone. What they have brought abides. Knowledge, largeness of soul, sympathy, increased social instincts, hungers and thirst for larger manhood, conceptions of God, the values of

<sup>24</sup> See "The Early Narratives of Genesis," by Herbert Edward Ryle.

<sup>25</sup> 2 Cor. 4 : 7.

social life, and a thousand other things remain in the treasury of the spirit. In our experiences we never identify the vehicle with its content. This is largely true with reference to much of the Bible. The things which are seen are for a season; the things that are unseen are eternal.<sup>26</sup> This is so about the relation of vehicle and thought, and our conception of the value of the permanent things of the Bible. We shall soon see that we do not regard many things in the Scriptures as of everlasting value. The law of the kingdom of God—of every kingdom with which God has to do—is first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear.<sup>27</sup> With all of us there are things, elemental, germinal, and initial, then crude stages in which life, ideals, and religion are growing, then the ripened stage which explains all that has gone before. No one should be surprised to find in the story of the origins recorded in the Bible much that seems unlike what we today cherish and love, such as crude morals, imperfect ideas of God and of life that will not stand the test of the revelation made in Jesus Christ. This stares us in the face when we study the Scriptures. Out of it all we come to see the permanent values of life and of truth, and these authenticate themselves to us by their own inherent, axiomatic power. Mankind in thinking and living has always followed the advice of Paul to the Philippians,<sup>28</sup> “Whereunto we have attained, in the same let us walk.” Truth is often like beautiful water-lilies that float upon the surface of the pond with their roots in the black mire below the flower which explains all previous processes and history. There are the beginnings

<sup>26</sup> 2 Cor. 4 : 18.

<sup>27</sup> Mark 4 : 28.

<sup>28</sup> Phil. 3 : 16.

and the developments. Not the least of the permanent values of the Bible are precisely those we are now describing. They are the revelations of the processes through which God reveals himself, of the developments of ideals into which he would lift us, of the growth of fellowship and communion with himself which in all ages will be commensurate with our knowledge of him and our spiritual attainment.

### III. VALUES SEEN IN HUMAN LIFE

There are also spiritual values which the teaching pastor will discover with reference to his pupils.

#### 1. *The Place of the Bible in Religious Life*

The place of the Bible in their religious lives will be second only to that occupied by God and Jesus Christ. There may be preachers many and books without number, but the Bible will always stand as the religious classic. With more intelligence concerning it, its place will be higher than ever. Hitherto it has furnished vocabulary, beautiful quotations and illustrations, material for devout meditation, and incentive to sacrificial service, but most of all it has given Jesus Christ<sup>29</sup> to us. The Bible will never be outgrown. No one who has really studied it sanely will ever speak slightly of it. The charge that scientific study of the Bible is mutilation and comparison of the work of scholars with the penknife of Jekoiakim<sup>30</sup> reveal only the ignorance of those who speak thus. The Bible is becoming more and more influential. In novels, and

<sup>29</sup> John 5 : 39.

<sup>30</sup> Jer. 36 : 23.

dramas, and general literature men are driven to read it if they would appreciate our literary heritage. More than all, the life this literature reveals is more thoroughly appreciated as it is understood. Next to the Life that is the light of men will be its power.

## *2. The Social Value of Biblical Ideals*

The social value of Biblical ideals becomes more and more apparent. Great principles which bear upon human relations are sought for. Instead of seeking to find specific teachings about unanticipated forms of sin, or maladjustments in commercial, political, or industrial life which did not exist in Biblical times, or using the Bible as a reference-book, men are going to the Scriptures for ideals of right relations to God and to one another, and are trying to apply these to existing conditions. Socialism without religion, the brute force of war, intellectual cultivation without spiritual nurture, have been found wanting. Statesmen who are Christians, and some who are not, are declaring that the only help for the world today is in religion, and in the application of its principles to human relations. The solvent of our muddy problems is found only in the ideals of the kingdom of God. That is the ideal that runs through the Scriptures and unifies the pamphlets that compose the sacred volume. That God shall rule in human life in all its relations has been the one purpose revealed in the plan of the Almighty. No one perceives this so well as he who sweeps through the history covered by this literature. At every stage God tries to moralize life, in the individual soul, in the relations between persons and between nations. The significance of the Bible for in-

ternational life has hardly been considered. Yet the book rings throughout with heavenly voices concerning human fraternity, justice, the contribution of the strong to the weak, and the great tolerance of God for the immature. The sociological value of the Scriptures is yet to be exploited for practical purposes. The greatest earthly art is the art of living together, and toward this art the contribution of the Scriptures will be the highest.

### 3. *The Democracy of Religious Truth*

In the religion of Jehovah there is nothing esoteric. All souls are equally dear to the heavenly Father.<sup>31</sup> All men are entitled to know all truth. No privileged class can lock up in its custody any revelation of the Father concerning himself or human life. In Judaism and in Christianity there are no places for religious secret societies or esoteric truth. Whatever is whispered in the ear shall be revealed upon the housetop.<sup>32</sup> No other volume insists upon the democracy of knowledge so emphatically. Wherever it has been translated into a vernacular, and freedom of study permitted, men have been emancipated. Formerly the lips of the priest kept knowledge.<sup>33</sup> Now all men are priests unto God. The few are no longer the custodians of religious reality. Every man must share with others his experiences of that reality. The missionary character of the Scriptures lies in this fact. There is to be no aristocracy of Biblical scholars. Truth discovered must be published. The Bethlehem shepherds went all the way

<sup>31</sup> Matt. 10 : 27.

<sup>32</sup> Ezekiel 18, a pivotal utterance in the history of theology.

<sup>33</sup> Mal. 2 : 7.

and saw what had occurred, and then proceeded to tell others.<sup>34</sup> That course should characterize all who understand the Biblical spirit and ideals. Selfishness in the possession of religious knowledge is impossible. Altruism in everything that God gives is part of the condition upon which the Almighty bestows. A Bible-knowing people will be missionary, evangelistic, educational, and philanthropic.

#### *4. The Increase of Reverence Through Knowledge*

There will come increasing love and reverence for the Scriptures with increasing knowledge. We used to hear the remark, "I know the Bible is from God because there are so many things in it I cannot understand." As if incomprehensibility could ever characterize a God who is struggling to reveal himself to his creatures, and to have them share his life. Precisely the opposite is now said, "We know the Bible is from God only so far as we understand it." It authenticates itself to our moral natures as the sun to the eye, the perfume to the nostril, or the air to the lung. Superstition is awe based upon ignorance. Reverence is awe based upon knowledge. No longer is the material book of paper, ink, and leather a fetish. We go deeper than what can be seen and handled. Bibliolatry is passing. Men explore, and when in the presence of divine things they worship. Jacob said, "The Lord was in this place, and I knew it not."<sup>35</sup> We search for him in every place and revere him wherever we find him. There is no danger of destroying the faith of those who know. Credulity may be set aside and superstition displaced, but the abiding confidence that men of old

<sup>34</sup> Luke 2 : 17, 18.

<sup>35</sup> Gen. 28 : 16.

spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost<sup>36</sup> can come into our hearts only as we understand what these men said. One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is the critical faculty<sup>37</sup> which does not believe every spirit, but tries the spirits whether they be of God.<sup>38</sup> When we exercise this gift of judgment, upon the discovery of the voice of God men become more reverent. Multitudes within the last generation have been emancipated from mistaken conceptions of the Bible and have found new love for it and new life through it. It has not yet been made the book of the people. In this vast ignorance of what it really is and teaches lies unlimited scope for the ministry of the teaching pastor. Unlimited joy can come to him and to those who are taught, when the Bible is no longer a sealed book to the majority of Christians, but when its significance has been made as wide-spread as Christian discipleship.

##### 5. *How the Bible Was Meant to Guide Life*

We can also understand how the Bible is “the rule of faith and practise.” Scriptural guidance, coveted by countless devout hearts, will never be achieved while the book is regarded as a collection of disjointed maxims for modern life, or so long as human conduct is controlled by irreverent and mechanical uses of it. The Bible is no law-book, but a record of growing religious life. God trusts us. This is the meaning of the divinest gift of God to the world—the forgiveness of sins in Jesus Christ. Pardon is a legal word concerning the remission of penalty.

<sup>36</sup> 2 Pet. 1 : 21.

<sup>37</sup> 1 Cor. 12 : 10 ; 14 : 29.

<sup>38</sup> 1 John 4 : 1.

Forgiveness is a social word relating to the restoration of personal relations. Because God forgives he trusts. He trusts us with new days when we have abused those that are past; with new friends when we have been disloyal to old ones; with new opportunities when we have abused those that have gone. He trusts us when others do not trust us; even when we do not trust ourselves. He trusts us that we may love him with our minds by our right thinking, and with our wills that we may be self-determining in our conduct. In all this he trusts us with those principles of true living revealed in the life of which the Bible is the record. Forgiven men exercise the responsibilities of the divine trust in them because of the Father's forgiveness through Jesus Christ. In some far-off day, yet too distant for even a glimpse of it, men will accept to the full this trusting forgiveness of the Father and will see the Bible more than ever as the guide of life, and in the principles it reveals more than ever the strength and the fullness of humanity's joy. Not by minute regulations of life does the Bible become the lamp to our feet, but by disclosing the divine principles of righteous living and loving service that God trusts us to discover and to apply in the details of our personal lives and social relations. It is the law in the heart that controls.<sup>39</sup> Only such study as we are advocating will yield these stars for the nights of our perplexities.

#### IV. THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

The teaching pastor will achieve the highest results in the knowledge of God. The historical

<sup>39</sup> Jer. 31 : 33.

method of Bible study will lead to the discovery of what God did in history and of what he is doing today. It will prevent us from imagining deity and what the deity of our imagination should have done. This *a-priori* method of theology gives freedom to each wild fancy to conceive a deity and permits as many deities as there are minds who try thus to imagine him. On the other hand, the careful student who seeks from the literature to reproduce the history and to appraise the results of study for the purposes of theology, will have a clear conception of how God has revealed himself. He will avoid the grotesque results of the *a-priori* method. "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself,"<sup>40</sup> is an expression put into the lips of Jehovah by a Hebrew poet. There is ample justification for this saying in the variations of theology, each colored by personalities that have tried to make gods in their own image. Among the things which the teaching pastor will discover and share with his pupils are the following:

### 1. *God's Revelation of Himself Progressive*

God has progressively revealed himself. His method has been evolutionary. He spoke as men were able to hear, and unveiled himself as men were able to see. The extent of the revelation was measured by the receptive capacity of men. Revelation enlarged life. The growing development of men also produced widenings of spirit and keenness of perception, and to these widened souls God made larger revelations. The growing life and increased light kept pace with each other. The time has passed

<sup>40</sup> Ps. 50 : 21.

when men think that all parts of the Bible have the same spiritual value, that permanent revelations are found equally in early Hebrew history and in the fulness of time,<sup>41</sup> that truth spoken in fragmentary and multiform ways has the same value as the revelation of God made in a Son.<sup>42</sup> In the crescent evolution of humanity, God came ever increasingly. There are crude morals in the Old Testament that could not for a moment stand the test of Christian standards. No modern churches would allow some notable Old Testament characters to retain membership in them. Yet these same characters were far above their contemporaries in other nations and even in their own. We have given up the idea that one nation could monopolize the revelation of God. The early thought that Israel could monopolize Jehovah vanished in the thought of eighth-century prophets. Think of Isaiah declaring that the time was coming when Israel should be one-third of God's people, with Egypt that had oppressed them for so many centuries another third, and Assyria that had deported so many of the tribes the other third.<sup>43</sup> Think of the book of Jonah as a protest against the spirit that would exclude Assyria from the grace of Jehovah.<sup>44</sup> We also lose the thought that foreign religions made no appeal to Jehovah. What meaning there was in the statement that Jehovah would not throw away the bruised reeds with which men tried to walk the journey of life, nor puff out the dimly burning, smoky flame from the lamps they used to light their way until he should send forth human judgment, the rational nature, unto its victory over what the

<sup>41</sup> Gal. 4 : 4.

<sup>43</sup> Isa. 19 : 23-25.

<sup>42</sup> Heb. 1 : 1.

<sup>44</sup> Jonah 4 : 11.

Jew regarded as broken staffs and dim lights! We have abandoned the notion that Jehovah ruled humanity by whims and arbitrary caprices. It is a far journey from killing a man who works on the Sabbath day<sup>45</sup> to the statement that the Sabbath was made for man;<sup>46</sup> from the dim days when men dreamed that God commanded them to massacre an entire population<sup>47</sup> to the love of God that came not to destroy lives but to save them.<sup>48</sup> There is a vast moral distance between a beatitude upon the man who beats out the brains of infants against the rocks, and the arms of Christ that snuggled the little ones to his breast and the voice of the Christ who says that of such is the kingdom of heaven.<sup>49</sup> There is a long step in morals between the supposed command to borrow jewelry from the Egyptians with no thought of returning it<sup>50</sup> and the noble speech of Zaccheus who would return fourfold to any victim of his extortion.<sup>51</sup> Today in this light of the progressive unveiling of the nature of God we are free from both the intellectual and the moral difficulties which beset the lover of the Scriptures before the historical method of Bible study came to the perplexed student. Men could conceive of their deities only in terms of religions all around them, modified by such differences as God himself had made known. Large numbers did not believe in monotheism. Their creed embraced a belief in Chemosh as much as in Jehovah.<sup>52</sup> It was a matter of territory. Even David thought that if he were driven from Palestine he should be forced to serve

<sup>45</sup> Exod. 35 : 1-3.

<sup>46</sup> Mark 2 : 27.

<sup>47</sup> 1 Sam. 15 : 2, 3.

<sup>48</sup> Luke 9 : 56.

<sup>49</sup> Ps. 137 : 9 ; Mark 10 : 13-16.

<sup>50</sup> Exod. 3 : 22.

<sup>51</sup> Luke 19 : 8.

<sup>52</sup> Judg. 11 : 24.

strange gods in another land.<sup>53</sup> We no longer conceive of God as fighting for us because he is obliged to be loyal to his people, whether right or wrong. Our question is whether we are battling on the side of God who cares more for justice and righteousness than he does for the preservation of lineal descendants from the loins of Abraham. In the eighth century before Christ ideas of God changed rapidly. Those prophets have recorded the revelations of God that came through their own lives and times. We no longer emphasize the Old Testament law as being binding upon us. The prophets had moral courage to battle against the priests who insisted upon an external, mechanical routine such as constituted the essence of religion in surrounding nations. No one can read the first chapter of Isaiah, or the sixth chapter of Micah, or the Fifty-first Psalm, and many other portions of the Scripture without seeing how the prophetic ideals brushed aside external performances and insisted upon internal righteousness and love. Amos represents Jehovah as saying,<sup>54</sup> "Did ye bring unto me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel?" Jeremiah's utterances<sup>55</sup> are more positive: "Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel: Add your burnt offerings unto your sacrifices and eat ye flesh. For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices; but this thing I commanded them, saying, Hearken unto my voice, and I will be your God and ye shall be my people; and walk ye in all the way

<sup>53</sup> 1 Sam. 26 : 19 ; cf. Ps. 137 : 4.

<sup>54</sup> Amos 5 : 25.

<sup>55</sup> Jer. 7 : 21-23.

that I command you, that it may be well with you." All these things and many more the honest teaching pastor will discover and communicate to his people. There is a vast difference between the theology of Jesus and the various theologies outlined in the different periods of Old Testament history.

## 2. *The Steady Development Toward Theism*

This development is steadily toward a theistic conception of God, toward an idea of him distinctly religious that appeals to and calls out the uttermost devotion. The progress is not toward elaboration of rites and ceremonies. Ezekiel's program never came to pass.<sup>56</sup> Many such programs and predictions that grew out of ardent hopes failed of realization. They never will be realized, not only because world conditions have changed, but also because these predictions and visions were not along the pathway toward the theistic conception of God fully revealed to us only in Jesus Christ. We need not stop to discuss the matter of "unfulfilled prophecy." The bare fact that God wanted to reveal *himself*, not to make programs for one century or a thousand centuries, is enough to disclose that his purpose was the unveiling of his nature, that he might enlist men in fellowship with him in sharing his life of freedom, righteousness, and love. The current is steady. We need not stop to investigate the little eddies that swirl along the banks. At last we come to him who was Immanuel, and realize that just as the flower explains the seed, the stem, and the leaf, just as the fruit explains the root, the trunk, and the twig, just as the wheat explains the blade and

<sup>56</sup> Ezekiel, chapters 40 ff.

the ear, so Jesus Christ explained all the past. It should inspire one with profound gratitude that he can see the unfolding of a God not only president over but resident in all life, both transcendent and immanent. At last we have come to realize the Character that was struggling against the limitations of human life and circumstance in unceasing effort to dissolve all fogs that hid him and stand out in clear vision in the Christ whom we adore. One does not have to undervalue any statements of Israel's prophets or psalmists who rose to see the righteousness and love of Jehovah, but wonders at these mountain peaks of personality and the glimpses they had of the shining above the clouds that shadowed those who lived in the plains beneath. We yet use much of their language in our prayers and in our hymns, but consciously or unconsciously we are putting into their words the higher life, the sweeter devotion, and the more wonderful revelation that has been given to us through Jesus Christ our Lord.

### *3. The Reality of God*

We also come to a firmer conviction of the reality of God. Men will not live long in the ministry before they realize that two things most needed today are the sense of the reality of God and a proper understanding of the Bible. These two are related. For many God yet dwells in thick darkness.<sup>57</sup> Like Job they hunt everywhere for him and cannot find him.<sup>58</sup> They do not take the right path. A patient, honest study of the Scriptures will beget in men a

<sup>57</sup> Ps. 18 : 11 ; 97 : 2 ; 1 Kings 8 : 12.

<sup>58</sup> Job 9 : 11 ; 23 : 8, 9.

consciousness that the divine factor is just as real as human factors in the life of the world. When men have seen the progress we have been describing and the passionate struggle of the Infinite One to make himself known to men that his creatures may have fellowship with him, and then come to see Jesus Christ, they will recognize that the sense of the reality of God has been growing all through the history recorded in the book. A great theologian not long since declared that the most luminous discovery of theology during the half century before he made the statement was that God was like Jesus Christ.<sup>59</sup> The Christlikeness of God is the thought that within the last generation has been increasingly borne in upon the thinking of men. They have come to believe the words of Jesus.<sup>60</sup> God has become more real because the historical Christ has become clearer to our minds through the patient study of the last quarter of a century. Our Father is no hazy existence who once lived in the dim distance of time, who possibly exists somewhere in the infinite regions of space. The fact that he works through life, that the revelations of himself are historical, that through the experiences of men and the currents of human history he has disclosed himself, makes him more real to us. Lunching one day with the late Dr. Lyman Abbott, the writer asked him, "What is the most real thing in your consciousness?" He hesitated about answering the question because he did not like to use the language of cant or pietism. At last in the simplicity of his honest nature he said: "The most real thing in my consciousness is

<sup>59</sup> William Newton Clarke in address at the semi-centennial of Newton Theological Institution.

<sup>60</sup> John 14 : 9.

God. I realize him most not always when I am preaching, but during the hours of my daily work." At that time he was engaged in writing a book that caused a certain well-known minister to brand him as an infidel. No man can give himself to the honest study of the Scriptures and to the glorious privilege of sharing the results of that study with others without increasingly knowing the reality of God.

#### 4. *God Works Now as Hitherto*

God is working today as he always did. Divine processes have never ended, nor will they end until human capacity becomes equal to that of God. God is revealing himself today. He is still creating. Our scientific men see the processes. Our knowledge like that of the great apostle is only in part<sup>61</sup> and we see by means of dim reflections of a mirror, in enigmas, but we shall know even as we are known. One inch of the circumference of a circle that extends billions of miles is all we need in order to know the path of that circle, to locate its center, to measure the area included in the circumference. A thimbleful of ocean water will tell us its nature. The spectroscopes reveal the composition of the stars. Precisely what the arc of the circle is to the whole, or the sample of the ocean is to its leagues of water, or the lines of the spectroscope are to Betelguese, exactly that is the study of God revealed in human life recorded in the Scriptures. We pray to a Father who is now at work, and not to one who used to work. "My Father worketh hitherto and I work," said<sup>62</sup> Jesus. God is working in us even

<sup>61</sup> 1 Cor. 13 : 12.

<sup>62</sup> John 5 : 17.

while we are working out our own right relation to him, to the physical universe, and to our fellow men.<sup>63</sup> Not in spite of ourselves, not wholly external to us is the activity of the heavenly Father. We are workers together with him.<sup>64</sup> Daily each calling becomes more divine. Every man, wherever the providence of God puts him in an occupation useful and helpful to his fellows, is a minister of God ordained to that particular ministry by virtue of the endowment God has given him. If the sane study of the Bible teaches anything, it shows us that all men in all generations can take with them into their lives the consciousness of a God still at work. The principles and objectives that control his work are those revealed to us by the study of the Scriptures. What an inspiration there is in all these truths not only for teaching pastors, but also for all our church schools, in our colleges; for the men of commerce who can be thus emancipated from sordid and selfish desires usually associated with business life; for the professional men who may regard their knowledge of health and disease a trust for the use of their fellow men, or their acquaintance with human experience in matters of justice and equity as a gift for the establishment of orderly relations. There is no menial service. There is no life that is a vessel of dishonor if that life has the conception that the same God is working today as in the past and is in all things and over all things.

These lectures have dealt specifically with the relation of a pastor to his Bible and his privilege of

<sup>63</sup> Phil. 2 : 12, 13.

<sup>64</sup> 1 Cor. 3 : 9.

sharing all he can get from it with those whom God entrusts to his care. Now as in other days life is found by the knowledge of God <sup>65</sup> that comes through the Scriptures, the physical universe, current history, and ourselves. When men did not have access to the Scriptures, they hungered for them. Have we reached the day when this priceless literature floods the earth and has become so commonplace that men no longer care to know the story of the coming of God into human life? If for a single generation all ministers, without regard to denominational connection, could spend their lives in leading those they serve into a knowledge of the Scriptures, the next generation would witness a world the like of which has never been seen.

<sup>65</sup> John 17 : 3.



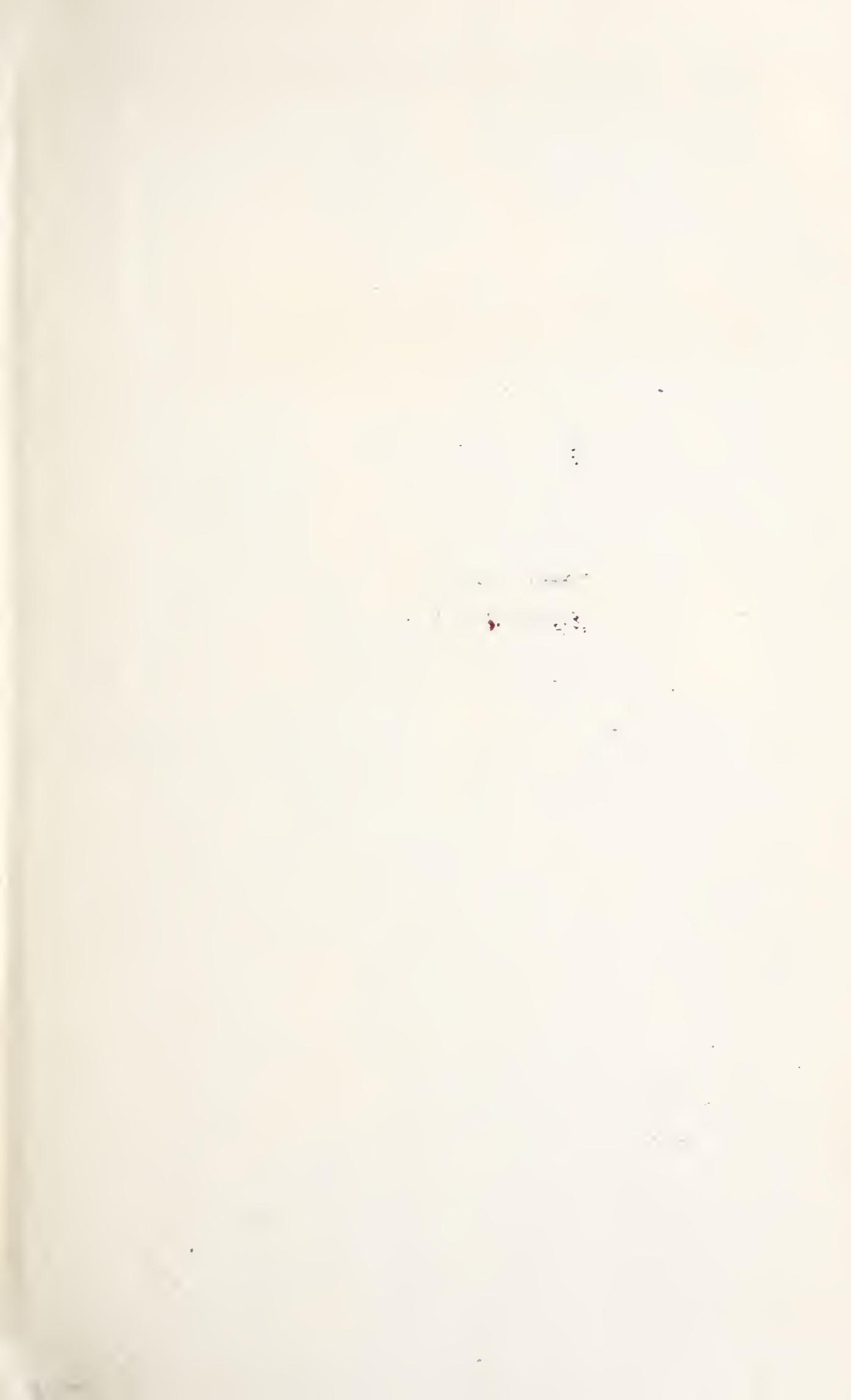




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